

Algerian troops kill 70 rebels, 15 civilians slain in road attack

PARIS (R) — Algerian security forces have killed 70 suspected rebels in operations across the country and 15 civilians were slain in a road attack, security sources and newspapers reported Tuesday.

Government forces said "terrorists" killed 15 civilians on Monday on a road in Ain Djedje area in the western province of Tlemcen, 400 kilometres from the capital, Algiers.

The security forces, in a statement issued late Monday night on the official Algerian news agency APS, said a "terrorist

group" — the term used by the authorities for rebels — killed the 15 civilians as they were travelling in three vehicles. It gave no more details.

In the neighbouring province of Mascara, troops had killed 36 rebels over the past four days and were besieging up to 50 more guerrillas, said Al Khabar newspaper.

Thirty-four rebels, including 10 in one village called Amarchia, south of Algiers, had also been killed in other military operations in the same period, said Al Khabar and

La Tribune.

Al Khabar said tanks bombarded Amarchia and troops then moved in to take over the area, which the rebels had turned into a base after forcing residents to leave last June.

The newspaper said the 10 rebels who were killed on Monday were members of a group who massacred 131 villagers in the nearby hamlet of Sidi Hamed early in January.

Government troops have killed more than 100 rebels recently in operations throughout Algeria following a spate of mas-

sacres of civilians, according to local newspapers.

About 1,200 civilians died in massacres between Christmas and the end of the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan last week.

The government blamed Islamist rebels for the carnage.

According to Western estimates, more than 65,000 people, including rebels, civilians and security force members, have died in Algeria since early 1992, when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

Top Turkish general visits Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The commander of Turkey's land forces began a four-day visit to Israel on Tuesday that underscored deepening defence ties between the two Middle Eastern military powers.

Israeli defence analysts said discussions on the crisis with Iraq were bound to figure in the visit by Turkish General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, though the timing of his trip was coincidental.

Gen. Kivrikoglu is scheduled to hold talks with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak, Israeli military sources said.

He is also due to visit the Israeli army ground forces command, its technology and logistics branch and the air force, and will tour the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial.

Recent close ties between the Jewish state and NATO member Turkey, overwhelmingly Muslim but officially secular, have alarmed many Arab states.

The two countries held their first joint naval exer-

cises with the United States in the eastern Mediterranean last month.

Iraq, Iran and Syria condemned the drills, in which the participants rehearsed search and rescue procedures, as a threat to regional security.

A military accord between Israel and Turkey in 1996 allowed Israeli air force planes to train in Turkish airspace and opened the door to lucrative arms deals that could top \$1 billion.

Israel is already upgrading Turkey's two squadrons of F-4 fighter planes and is bidding for other modernisation projects.

The Turkish news agency Anatolia said on Monday that Gen. Kivrikoglu's visit would also involve discussions on a possible Turkish purchase of Israeli Merkava tanks.

Turkish and other newspapers have reported negotiations for the joint manufacture of as many as 1,000 Merkava Mark III tanks and an advanced version of the Israeli Pop-eye air-to-ground missile.

Efraim Inbar, an Israeli strategic affairs analyst, said he expected assessments of the crisis with Iraq to figure in Gen. Kivrikoglu's talks "as part of the ongoing strategic dialogue."

"To some extent we have differing views. The Israelis back the Americans while Turkey is trying to play some mediating role," Mr. Inbar said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem is expected to travel to Baghdad on Wednesday for talks with the Iraqi leadership on the crisis with Washington over U.N. arms inspections.

The United States has warned Baghdad it is prepared to unleash a military strike from a force of 30 ships and 300 warplanes if Iraq does not provide unrestricted access to weapons inspectors.

Turkey backed the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war, but it has since complained of huge financial losses as a result of U.N. sanctions on Baghdad.

Israel arrests 22 suspected Islamic militants

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — The Israeli army arrested 22 Palestinians during Muslim holidays over the past four days for suspected links to Islamist groups, a Palestinian security official said Tuesday.

Most of the 22 were arrested at Israeli checkpoints around the West Bank towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem as they travelled for family visits during the four-day 'Eid al-Fitr, which ended the Holy Month of Ramadan, the official told AFP.

They were seized on suspicion of belonging to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) or Islamic Jihad, said the official, a member of the Palestinian security liaison with the Israeli army, who asked not to be named.

Israel has arrested hundreds of Palestinians on suspicion of links to Islamist groups since two Hamas suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and September which killed 21 Israelis.

Hamas and the smaller Jihad group have rejected Palestinian self-rule accords with Israel and have conducted a campaign of violence which has killed scores of Israelis since 1994.



HOUSE DEMOLISHED: An Israeli policeman pushes Raed Samhan away as an Israeli bulldozer demolishes his family's house Tuesday in the West Bank village of Ras Karakar. The Israelis claimed Mr. Samhan's house was demolished because it was built without a building licence (Reuters photo)

Iranian official begins visit to Syria, Lebanon

DAMASCUS (AP) — Iran's parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, arrived here Tuesday to discuss developments in the region.

Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency said Mr. Nateq-Nouri would remain in Syria for three days and then visit Lebanon for two days.

Mr. Nateq-Nouri will discuss economic issues

with Syrian and Lebanese officials as well as the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations over U.N. weapons inspections.

"We condemn U.S. military intervention... Any military step against Iraq is rejected and unreasonable," Mr. Nateq-Nouri told reporters here.

He said he would talk with Syrian officials about setting up an inter-

parliamentary union for Islamic nations.

Iranian officials in Damascus said a number of economic agreements aimed at establishing joint projects in Syria will be signed during Mr. Nateq-Nouri's visit.

Iran has warm relations with Syria, which supported it during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Iran backs Hizbollah,

the main Shiite Islamist guerrilla group fighting to oust Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Shiites are a minority in most of the Arab world, where Sunni Muslims predominate, but they are the majority in Iran and the largest single religious sect in Lebanon. There are 1.2 million Shiites in Lebanon, and most Iranians are Shiites.

Arafat orders early release of activists jailed for involvement in bombings

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has ordered the early release of two activists jailed for involvement in a January 1995 bombing that killed 21 Israelis, Palestinian officials said Tuesday.

Aziz Shami and Omar Shalah were convicted in a Palestinian military court in April 1995 for planning and involvement in a suicide bombing at a hitchhiking post for Israeli soldiers north of Tel Aviv.

Palestinian Prison

Authority Chief Hamdi Rifi said the two men — members of Islamic Jihad — were included on a list of 31 prisoners Mr. Arafat was granting pardons or early releases to as part of festivities for the Muslim 'Eid, which marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Shami will be released next year, after serving four years of his 15-year sentence. Shalah will be released in four months, after serving three years of his 25-year sentence, his

family said.

There was no official explanation for the early releases. Palestinian human rights activist Eyad Sarraj said the men had been wrongly charged and were innocent of the bombing. He said another Palestinian man held by Israel is considered to be behind the bombing and not these two.

The two will not be released immediately because they are still serving time for their membership in Islamic Jihad.

'Traitor,' 'murderer' spray-painted on Rabin memorial

TEL AVIV (AP) — Vandals spray-painted "Rabin is a traitor, Rabin is a murderer," on a Jerusalem memorial to slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on

Tuesday, and a militant Jewish group claimed responsibility for the act.

Rabin was assassinated at a November 1995 peace rally in Tel Aviv

by a Jewish extremist.

The outlawed anti-Arab group Kach claimed responsibility for the vandalism, saying it was in retaliation for parliament plans to

relocate the grave of Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish West Bank settler and Kach supporter who massacred 29 Muslim worshippers at a Hebron mosque in 1994.

Goldstein's grave, in a park in the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron, has become a magnet for right-wing extremists who consider him a hero.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Mr. Bogus
16:30 French Cartoon Films
17:00 Ashuaia
18:00 Children's Programme — The Finder
18:30 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Doc. — E-M6
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Campus Cops
20:00 Traces of Guilt
21:00 Drama — Kung Fu
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series
23:59 Country Music

PRAYER TIMES

05:05 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:49 Dhuhur
14:49 'Asr
17:15 Maghreb
18:34 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifelh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be fine and warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Mazen Nballi 830435
Dr. Fayed Dabbas 759155
Dr. Adnan Zaghoul 898140
Dr. Fakher Bibeisi 552233
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 890280
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairouk pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Zuhour Al Qadi 906606
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

Jordan Valley

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 18, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

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EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

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EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdali 66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:25 Damascus (RJ)
08:05 Larnaca (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Istanbul (RJ)
16:55 Riyadh (add) (RJ)
17:50 Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
18:10 Rome (RJ)
18:10 London, Berlin (RJ)
23:10 Beirut (RJ)
00:05 Cairo (RJ)
02:05 Dhahran (add) (RJ)

10:30

Jeddah (SV)
Kuwait (KU)
Tunis (TU)
Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
Khartoum (add) (GF)
Tel Aviv (LY)
Vienna (OS)
Algiers (AH)
Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
Beirut (ME)
Paris, Damascus (AF)
Athens (OA)
London (BA)
London, Beirut (BA)
Amsterdam (KL)

ARRIVALS

ROYAL WINGS (RW)

07:45 Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

09:45 Rome (RJ)
10:40 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
12:00 Riyadh (add) (RJ)
19:30 Colombo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Bombay (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

20:30

New Delhi (RJ)
Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
Dhahran (add) (RJ)
Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 Bucharest (RO)
06:35 Larnaca (CY)
08:00 Beirut (ME)
08:25 London (BA)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
11:15 Al Hudaidah, Aden (IY)
12:00 Kuwait (KU)
12:00 Jeddah (SV)
14:10 Tunis (TU)
14:20 Sharjah (AH)
14:30 Khartoum (add) (RJ)
15:15 Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
15:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
15:30 Doha (QR)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)

ROYAL WINGS (RW)

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
16:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)

Home News

Fire breaks out in Zarqa gas cylinder warehouse

AMMAN (J.T.) — A fire broke out late Monday night at a gas cylinder warehouse in the Zarqa governorate, destroying at least 500 of the nearly half million cylinders stored there, according to the Civil Defence Department (CDD) Tuesday.

A department official said the fire, which occurred in the Barrawi district about two kilometres south of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC), did not spread to adjacent warehouses and caused no casualties.

A spokesman for the JPRC, the owner and operator of the warehouse, said distribution of gas cylinders to the public will not be affected since the warehouse still contains a sufficient number of cylinders to meet any demand.

He noted that the stored cylinders are owned by 90 distribution agencies in the Zarqa area.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, called CDD Director General Theeb Maani to enquire about the situation and was reassured that the fire was contained and isolated from the rest of the gas cylinders and prevented from spreading to other nearby warehouses.

CDD officials said it took just one hour to control and extinguish the fire, which they said could have been caused by a negligent worker in the warehouse.

However, an investigation into the cause of the fire is still under way, they added.

Major General Maani said the CDD has created a special committee comprising the CDD, the Public Security Department, and officials from the office of the Zarqa governor to conduct the investigation.

Maj. Gen. Maani said CDD personnel were assisted in fighting the fire by local residents and concerned government departments.

Noor Al Hussein Foundation names new executive director

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Sima S. Bahous as the new NHF executive director.

According to an NHF press release, Dr. Bahous previously served with the NHF from 1986 to 1995 as communications consultant to Her Majesty Queen Noor and assistant to the executive director in the areas of family and community development and women empowerment.

She also directed the NHF health communications project in the areas of child, maternal and family health.

"Socio-economic development is entering a new era, with increased emphasis on sustainability, women and gender issues, and enterprise development," Dr. Bahous commented.

"Within this framework, NGOs in Jordan face particularly strong challenges to support the government in combating poverty and unemployment and improving the overall quality of life for Jordanians. I look forward to working with my colleagues at the NHF and our partners in meeting these needs," she added.

Prior to her appointment as NHF executive director, Dr. Bahous also worked with the UNICEF office in Amman and managed a joint World Health Organisation/NHF development project in Yemen, the announcement stated.

The NHF was established in 1985 by Royal Decree "to coordinate and oversee the many projects and programmes which Queen Noor has helped establish or which she personally supports in the fields of culture, education, social welfare, and human and community development," according to foundation sources.

Dr. Bahous succeeds Yasser Tal upon the completion of his assignment as interim director.



Sima S. Bahous

Women activists blast deputy for suggesting they stay at home

By Fairouz Abu-Chazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian women activists have blasted a Jordanian deputy for suggesting that females should stay at home to raise their kids and clean the house while men go out to win the family's bread.

Lower House member Salameh Hiani suggested during a recent Parliament session that the country's 54,000 working women should quit their jobs and concentrate on raising the next generation to help advance the nation.

This will help the country's unemployed men find jobs, he argued.

Such views are often heard in a conservative male-dominated country where women suffer from inequalities in civil law, a raft of discriminatory legislation, legalised polygamy and "crimes of honour" — the murder of a woman by her family for suspected "dishonourable" activities.

But many female activists said his remarks would not jeopardise efforts to improve their lot, an idea backed by His Majesty King Hussein and others in circles of power.

"This is a backward move and backward thinking in trying to solve the unemployment problem," said Emily Naffa, a communist politician who failed to win a seat in the Nov. 4 elections, which produced an all-male Parliament.

Such an approach contradicted the Jordanian plan of creating equal opportunities for women in terms of job payment and promotion to reach decision-making positions.

"This contradicts life's simplest human rights, and also harms the cause of women and the efforts exerted towards that cause," Ms. Naffa told the Jordan Times.

"Women discover themselves in their jobs, because working broadens their capabilities and education and brings out their talents and qualifications."

But for Mr. Hiani, who represents the Balqa governorate in the 80-seat House, "a good mother raises a good child."

"This will not take place unless we provide women with the appropriate atmosphere for such a task."

In a speech during a five-day debate on the 1998 budget, which ended late last month, Mr. Hiani also stressed that women should never dream of gaining equal rights to men "because of their physical differences."

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," he said, quoting an old proverb. "Nurses and domestic helpers do not raise children the way mothers do."

Mr. Hiani also called for emancipating women "from their materialistic slavery."

"On the one hand, women have involved themselves in difficult living conditions and on the other hand, they are under pressure from boasting of being equal to men."

Mr. Hiani, in his plan to limit the need for women to work, proposed that the government allocate a specific amount of money to every working man's salary according to the number of daughters he supports and their ages.

Seventeen women candidates, including Toujan Faisal, Jordan's first and only woman member of Parliament, faced over 500 men in last year's November parliamentary elections and failed to win a single seat.

Ms. Faisal lost the seat she won in 1993 to former Minister of Information Under-Secretary Nayef Mouda in the elections, which she said were rigged by the government.

A recent editorial that appeared in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm lamented the lack of women parliamentarians.

"The Parliament with which we enter the 21st century is like our Parliaments from the 1950s and 1960s," mourned the newspaper.

"While we were supposed to be consolidating the place of women in Parliament... we have lost the single woman's voice," it added, referring to Mr. Faisal's election failure.

Jordan's elections, boycotted by Islamist-led opposition parties protesting what they said was an erosion of parliamentary authority, were dominated by pro-establishment male candidates with strong tribal affiliations.

Women are now organising to try and get the Jordanian government to adopt a 20 per cent quota to guarantee women representation in the next Parliament.

They are trying to collect signatures of one million people to underscore their demand.

The 40-seat Upper House (Senate), appointed by His Majesty King Hussein, has three women, while the government has one female minister and several under-secretaries.

Algerian minister rejects reports of army's complicity in massacres as 'baseless'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Algerian Culture and Communications Minister Hamrawi Habib on Tuesday rejected as "baseless" reports claiming that the Algerian army was responsible for some of the massacres in his country.

"These statements are aimed at justifying the barbaric acts of terrorists," he told reporters after talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

"These statements give hope to and boost the morale of terrorists at a time when all parties should support those trying to put an end to these acts," added Mr. Habib, who began a five-day visit to Jordan on Monday.

In an annual human rights report issued on Friday, the U.S. State Department claimed that up to 70,000 people had died since 1992 in the Algerian civil war. The report also blamed some of the killings on the government.

"Those who are committing terrorist acts to achieve their goals have now launched media campaigns to smear the reputation of the Algerian authorities, which were elected by the people," added Mr. Habib.

Algeria has said the actual death toll from the violence is 26,536, including both civilians and security forces.

In its report, the U.S. State Department stated that "the security forces carried out extra judicial killings, were responsible for numerous disappearances, [and] routinely tortured or otherwise abused detainees."

It called for a fact-finding mission to visit Algeria to investigate the massacres of civilians.

Mr. Habib said he wanted to brief Jordanian officials on the latest developments in Algeria and his government's efforts to put an end to "terrorists' massacres."

He said the annual meeting of the Jordanian-Algerian higher committee was scheduled to convene in Algiers during the first week of March, at which time both countries will discuss boosting bilateral trade and economic ties.

Mr. Habib said Algeria will attend any Arab summit to discuss the Middle East peace crisis and other regional developments.

"Such a meeting should be a chance for all Arabs to speak freely and put an end to their differences, because the challenges ahead are so great and the time is ripe to forget all our differences," the minister added.

On the standoff between Iraq and the United States over demands for unlimited access for arms inspectors, Mr. Habib said his country supports all efforts to reach a diplomatic solution and avoid a military confrontation.

"Algeria believes that it is necessary to spare Iraq from catastrophes and disasters, and our country supports all efforts that would contain the crisis," Mr. Habib said.

Meanwhile, Jordan and Algeria signed a cultural agreement stipulating the exchange of cultural experts.

The agreement, signed by Mr. Habib and his Jordanian counterpart Qassem Abu Ein, includes among other things holding exhibitions in the two capitals.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Algerian Culture and Communications Minister Hamrawi Habib on Tuesday discuss recent developments in the Middle East (Petra photo)

Cabinet extends terms of five ambassadors

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Tuesday decided to grant one-year extensions to the terms of five ambassadors who have spent five consecutive years at their present posts.

During a regular session, the Cabinet extended the terms of Haidar Mahmoud to Tunisia, Farouq Qasrawi to Japan, Fawwaz Abu Tayeh to Romania, Shaker Arabiyat to Bahrain and Loay Al Khashman to Indonesia.

Interior minister approves new political party

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid has announced his approval of the establishment of the Jordan Labour Party (JLP), which has been founded with 60 initial members.

In a statement released Tuesday, the minister said the new party, Jordan's 22nd, was approved in conformity with the provisions of the Political Parties Law and the country's Constitution and National Charter, and as part of the government's efforts to enhance democracy and political pluralism in the Kingdom.

Mr. Rashid was quoted last October by the local media as saying that his ministry was studying a new political parties law to replace the existing 1992 law in order to accommodate political developments and the requirements of the next century.

The minister said the new draft law would deal with loopholes in the present law, primarily the question of the minimum number of founding members of a party, which at present stands at 50.

According to the minister's announcement, the new party will seek to enhance security and stability through respecting laws, give due attention to the industrial and agricultural sectors, support measures to deal with unemployment, and back efforts to promote the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the party will strive to safeguard women's constitutional rights, give due attention to the youth sector and the environment, fight monopolies, encourage voluntary work, help develop Jordan's educational system, and will be especially concerned with helping the handicapped and promoting life in the rural districts of Jordan, the statement added.

The party, whose founding members represent people from walks of life ranging from school teachers, government employees and housewives, will hold its first congress and appoint its secretary general at a time to be announced later.

Japanese ambassador-designate pledges to continue efforts to bolster bilateral relations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan's newly appointed ambassador-designate to Jordan, Kouchi Matsumoto, on Tuesday said he will pursue the efforts of his predecessors to bolster Jordanian-Japanese relations, particularly in economic fields.

Mr. Matsumoto, who is due to arrive in Amman on Wednesday to assume his new post, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in Tokyo that Japan will maintain its support for Jordan.

He added that the Kingdom is a key player in the peace process, and has a very significant geographic location and political status in the Middle East.

Japan's economic cooperation with Jordan conforms to the main principles included in Japan's charter for development aid, Mr. Matsumoto said, adding that his country seeks to promote economic ties and back the peace process.

Noting that Jordan enjoys stability and security, Mr. Matsumoto said he plans to encourage Japanese tourist groups to visit the Kingdom's archaeological sites, particularly the ancient Nabataean city of Petra.

Stating that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has conducted studies on promoting Jordan's tourism industry, the ambassador-designate said he will exert efforts towards finalising legal procedures for organising direct flights between Jordan and Japan.

According to Mr. Matsumoto, Japan will continue to provide technical and economic aid to Jordan because Jordan is directly involved in the peace process, and is contributing to establishing stability in the region and conducting democratic and economic reforms.

Japan offers the greatest amount of development aid to Egypt, followed by Turkey, said the ambassador-designate, but Jordan receives the largest amount of Japan's aid in per capita terms.

He noted that a senior Japanese official who visited Jordan recently has submitted a report to Tokyo recommending increased economic aid to the Kingdom.

Mr. Matsumoto said he did not believe that the current recession in Japan will adversely affect Tokyo's aid to Jordan.

Mr. Matsumoto is succeeding Takayuki Kimura, who ended his tour of duty last month.

New telephone exchange part of national overhaul — JTC

AMMAN (Petra) — The new Abdali telephone exchange went into operation at the beginning of this month as part of an overhaul of the national telecommunications system in Jordan, according to an official from the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC).

Mamoun Balqar, JTC director general, Monday said that with the inauguration of the new exchange, which has a 40,000-line capacity, the JTC has introduced changes increasing the previous six-digit numbers to seven.

Mr. Balqar said the number five has been added to all numbers starting from the left with 66, 67, 68, 69 or 60. All telephone numbers starting from the left with 70 have been changed to 562.

According to Mr. Balqar, the new JD2 million telephone exchange has made more telephone lines available for the public in general and citizens living in the Abdali district in particular.

According to the JTC, the Abdali exchange has affected the following districts: Jabal Hussein, Jabal Nuzha, Tla'a Al Ali, the University of Jordan, Wasfi Al Tal (Gardens) Street and the Ministry of Interior and Firas circles.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent visits Armed Forces headquarters
AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday visited the Armed Forces headquarters, where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh and his senior assistants and Commander of the Special Operations Forces His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah. The Regent and Field Marshal Kaabneh discussed issues of concern to the Jordan Armed Forces.

Badran tours Irbid, Azmi Al Mufri refugee camps
AMMAN (Petra) — Affairs Director General Ibrahim Badran on Tuesday toured the Irbid and Azmi Al Mufri refugee camps, where he and the camps' improvement committees discussed means of improving and developing the level of services provided to residents. Dr. Badran visited the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) health centres, youth clubs and the rehabilitation centres for handicapped persons in Azmi Al Mufri camp. Dr. Badran also met with Irbid Governor Qutub Majali, who briefed him on the conditions of the camps in the Irbid governorate and efforts to provide the best services for camp residents.

Israel launches anti-panic campaign over Iraqi threat

(Continued from page 1)

Interior ministry officials said Tuesday that large numbers of Israelis were also renewing their passports so they could flee abroad if the crisis with Iraq deepens.

Last Monday Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Mordechai issued a joint statement announcing that the government would begin providing fuller information on both the reality of the Iraqi threat and measures being taken to protect the public.

Launching the campaign, top military brass held a press conference in Tel Aviv Tuesday morning to explain that while Iraq has some non-conventional warheads and a few missile launchers, it was not believed to have the capability to strike Israel.

The government also released \$88 million to purchase additional gas masks and produce antidotes and antibiotics against the germ and chemical agents believed to be in Baghdad's arsenal, Israel Radio said.

Opposition members of parliament had accused Mr. Netanyahu of exploiting the crisis atmosphere to divert attention from the stalled Palestinian peace negotiations and justify his hard line towards an Arab world he views as hostile.

Mr. Netanyahu fed such concern in a speech Monday in which he said, "I think what is happening in the Gulf these days reminds us exactly of the kind of a Middle East we live in."

Israel "can be attacked with missiles, that we know, but we also know that we have a capability of reaction and deterrence everyone should take into consideration," he said.

"The crisis with Iraq fell into Netanyahu's lap like a ripe fruit and he is exploiting it to avoid reaching tough decisions regarding troop withdrawals" from the West Bank, said Yossi Katz, a member of parliament for the Labour Party.

A months-long U.S. effort to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations hit a brick wall last week-end when U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright failed to convince Mr. Netanyahu to press ahead with the troop pullbacks.

But independent analysts said the government's hesitation had more to do with confusion than political design.

"It's really just a question of being initially confused as to how to deal with the crisis," said Mark Heller of the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv.

"Netanyahu had to figure out how to walk the fine line between reassuring the public and trying to send some deterrent message to Iraq," he said.

Lebanon
peace efforts
memorial
her flights
Royal Wings (RW)
Tel Aviv (TA)
Amman (AM)
Baghdad (BG)
Dhahran (DH)
Dubai (DU)
San Jose (SJ)
Amsterdam (AM)
Buenos Aires (BA)
Lima (LI)
Buenos Aires (BA)
London (LO)
Cairo (CA)
Al Hudaybiyah (AH)
Kuala Lumpur (KL)
Shanghai (SH)
Khartoum (KH)
Bahrain (BH)
Tel Aviv (TA)
Amman (AM)
Baghdad (BG)
Dhahran (DH)
Dubai (DU)
San Jose (SJ)

Prince Charles arrives in Sri Lanka amid heightened security

COLOMBO (AFP) — Britain's Prince Charles arrived in Sri Lanka Tuesday amid unprecedented security to be the main guest at the country's celebrations for 50th anniversary of independence, witnesses said.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and two other senior ministers Ratnasiri Wickremaraj and Mangala Samaraweera welcomed Prince Charles to this former British colony.

The prince wearing a grey business suit stepped off a chartered jet flying the royal flag to be greeted by a 21-gun army salute at the Bandaranaike International Airport guarded by hundreds of elite troops.

He was given a garland of purple orchid flowers by a Sri Lankan school girl as a sign of welcome.

An airforce guard of hon-

our then presented arms while the airforce band played both national anthems during the brief but meticulously carried out ceremony.

The prince then walked down a receiving line of VIPs and signed the "golden book" at the airport which is named after President Kumaratunga's assassinated prime minister father Solomon Bandaranaike.

Black-uniformed commandos armed with AK-47 assault rifles ringed the airport in an unprecedented security operation to guard the visiting royal amid fears of Tamil Tiger guerrilla attacks.

The air force took over security at the airport last week as part of tight measures to protect it against bombing. A Tamil rebel van bomb exploded at the airport car park in June 1995

but failed to cause any damage.

Red-jacketed military police motorcycle riders escorted Prince Charles to inaugurate a nearby garment factory which has investments from Britain's Courtaulds Textiles at Minuwangoda, a lush coconut growing area.

Police lined the 35-kilometre road from the airport to the city centre and Prince Charles was due to visit a Buddhist temple before entering the capital where he will be hosted to dinner by the president.

The temple known as the Kelaniya Rajamaha Vihara is believed by Buddhists to be one of three places in Sri Lanka visited by Buddha himself. Kelaniya is a suburb of Colombo also known for its pottery.

The route taken by the visiting royal was closed for traffic several hours in

advance because the authorities feared attacks from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas.

The government was forced to hurriedly shift the main independence day celebrations from the historic hill resort of Kandy, 112 kilometres east of here, after the Jan. 25 truck bombing there blamed on the Tigers.

Sixteen people were killed in the suicide truck bombing that devastated Kandy's show-piece, the 16th century Buddhist temple where Prince Charles was due to attend a service Wednesday.

A civic reception for Prince Charles by the Colombo Municipal Council before his departure Thursday was cancelled because of fears expressed by his advance security guard, officials said.



Britain's Prince Charles is presented with a garland by a little girl on arrival at the airport in Sri Lanka where he is to participate in a celebration to mark the country's 50th anniversary of independence (Reuters photo)

Armenian president faces crisis as supporters quit

YEREVAN (R) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was in deep political trouble Tuesday after key supporters abandoned him, apparently over a territorial dispute with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan's foreign minister, Alexander Arzumanyan, and central bank chief Bagrat Asatryan resigned Monday in the latest tremor to shake a government split over policy on the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ruling Respublika bloc has also divided and several members have left to join the pro-Karabakh Yerkrapa (volunteer) faction.

Vano Siradegyan has also quit as mayor of the capital, Yerevan. It was not immediately clear if he was resigning his other post as leader of Ter-Petrosyan's Armenian national movement party, the largest party in the Respublika bloc.

The presidential press service said Monday the resignations had been accepted but a Ter-Petrosyan official denied this Tuesday.

No official reasons for the resignations were given. But political observers said they were related to a rift between Mr. Ter-Petrosyan and Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan over the 10-year conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

"The resignations are connected with (Karabakh)," said Avtur Bagdasaryan, head of the Armenian Political Scientists' Union.

"The political situation is complicated and tense," Nagorno-Karabakh, populated mostly by Christian Armenians, broke away from the control of predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan in the 1980s when Armenia and Azerbaijan were still part of the Soviet Union.

The Karabakh Armenians demanded they be removed from Azerbaijan's rule and be allowed to join Armenia. Later they declared independence as a step to eventual union with Armenia.

Thousands of people were killed in fighting between Azeris and Armenians after a fragile 1994 ceasefire came into effect.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan has urged concessions in the dispute, saying they could help Armenia repair its devastated economy and avoid international isolation. Mr. Kocharyan accuses him of making too many concessions.

Mr. Kocharyan has the political backing of powerful Defence Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, but Mr. Sargsyan denied recently that the army had any intentions of meddling in politics.

Yielding to international pressure, Mr. Ter-Petrosyan said last year Karabakh would probably have to settle for an arrangement in which it preserves its de facto independence from Azerbaijan while technically remaining part of it, at least on paper.

Under the plan, worked out by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, ethnic Armenians would give up Azeri lands they conquered outside Karabakh, allowing peacekeepers to control the area whose formal status would be resolved later.

Mr. Kocharyan and his supporters say the plan does not guarantee Karabakh's security. Azerbaijan has accepted the proposals.

The unrecognised Karabakh government, which depends greatly on Yerevan for support and sees Mr. Kocharyan as its advocate there, has rejected the OSCE plan supported by Mr. Ter-Petrosyan.

Philippines plane crashed into mountain, 30 dead, 15 survivors

CLAVERIA. Philippines (AFP) — A missing Philippines airliner with 104 people on board had crashed into a mountain, with at least 15 survivors and 30 killed, airlines officials said Tuesday.

Rescuers were battling across formidable terrain in a race to save the lives of the seriously injured and to find more survivors from the Cebu Pacific Air DC-9 which slammed into Mount Sumagaya, officials and radio reports said.

The news came some 24 hours after the plane vanished Monday while on an internal flight from Manila to Cagayan de Oro on the southern island of Mindanao.

Air force pilots and journalists who flew over the wreck said they saw silver and white pieces of metal strewn across the mountain amid fallen trees in the thickly forested area.

Brown earth where the plane had apparently plowed into the ground was also visible, they said. Cebu Pacific Air confirmed Tuesday the plane carrying 99 passengers and five crew had crashed.

"The positive sighting of flight 387 was confirmed this morning in the vicinity of Mount Sumagaya on the borderland of Gingoog and Claveria," the airline said in a statement.

"Initial reports reaching Cebu Pacific Air confirmed visual contact with 15 survivors," Airline senior Vice President Diego Garrido told a news briefing 30 people had been killed. There

was no immediate information about the fate of the other 59 people on board.

Earlier Radio Bombo Philippines, a private radio station which sent its own search team to the site, said injuries suffered by the 15 known survivors were serious.

Army Colonel Henry Singco of an army battalion in Cagayan de Oro said the wreckage was about 150 metres below the summit of the 2,234-metre mountain and the aircraft appeared to have exploded on impact.

A medical team from Cagayan de Oro and another team of medical experts from the post Makati Medical Centre in Manila were scheduled to be flown to the area later Tuesday, airline officials said.

They said the airline has activated a system for relatives of passengers who wish to go to Cagayan de Oro. About 40 relatives were closeted in a room at the airline office in Manila and were not allowed to speak with reporters.

Alex Ampuan had said earlier Tuesday he was waiting for his uncle who was aboard the plane. "My family is prepared, but I am still hoping they are still alive," he said.

Airline lawyer Levi Carbonell said they would try to avoid a situation where a class suit against the company would be filed.

"We will of course try to negotiate in good faith," he said, although the priority now was to take care of the dead, the survivors and their

relatives.

Search teams, armed with flashlights, had combed the area throughout the night, while an air operation was resumed at dawn after being called off at dusk Monday.

Other rescue volunteers, including from the Red Cross, were also waiting at the airport for instructions. The aircraft had last made contact with ground control about 12 minutes before its scheduled landing time. Those on board were said to include a Japanese and Austrian national.

Air transportation officials said the pilot made an unscheduled stopover in the central city of Tacloban on Leyte Island, diverting it from its original flight path. Garrido said the aircraft which crashed was 31 years old, and that the airline has eight others of this type in its fleet.

"These (planes) are maintained on a daily basis. They are getting checked every 24 hours," he told reporters. He also admitted that there had been some cancellation of bookings from passengers but otherwise "the airline is operating on schedule."

Cebu Pacific Air is owned by ethnic Chinese tycoon John Gokongwei, who has interests in banking, real estate, food, telecommunications and media.

It is among several airlines which emerged after Manila deregulated the industry in the early 1990s.

The plane was manufactured in 1967 and acquired from Air Canada in March 1997.

EU and U.S. remain deadlocked over Libya/Iran legislation

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) and United States remain at loggerheads over U.S. legislation that provides for sanctions against oil companies that invest in Iran and Libya, the European Commission said Tuesday after talks here Tuesday.

"There was no breakthrough. Negotiations are continuing," a spokesman said after EU Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan met U.S. Under-secretary Stuart Eizenstat.

The talks came the day after it emerged that the U.S. government is about to rule that three foreign petroleum companies which have concluded a joint energy deal with Iran are subject to sanctions.

Washington is, however, expected to delay imposing them for 90 days to give France's Total, Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's state oil group Petronas time to amend or cancel their \$2 billion investment in gas fields off the Iranian coast.

A second 90-day delay is also an option under the U.S. legislation and even then U.S. President Bill Clinton can decide not to apply sanctions.

Under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act, the U.S. government can punish countries investing more than \$20 million a year in the Iranian energy sector or more than \$40 million in Libya's.

The aim of the legislation is to prevent Iran and Libya from getting the foreign currency that could be used to acquire weapons of mass destruction, according to the U.S. The EU has long opposed the legislation and a similar law on trade with Cuba on the grounds that it extends U.S. jurisdiction to European companies operating outside the U.S.

The U.S. ruling on the energy deals is expected to be made public following British Prime Minister Tony Blair's Feb. 5-7 visit to the United States.

Police already on Clarke's trail, claims anti-child sex group

AUCKLAND (AFP) — Police in an undisclosed country have been investigating the alleged sexual activities of Sri Lanka-based science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke for the past year, an international anti-child prostitution group said Tuesday.

"They were following some leads given to them by somebody and they contacted us," Ron O'Grady, chairman of the anti-child prostitution and pornography group, Ecpat International, told AFP here.

He would not disclose which country the police were from, other than confirming it was not Sri Lanka. He said the initial inquiry to Ecpat had been made a year ago.

"They had been following it for a little while," Mr. O'Grady said.

He was not clear on whether the inquiry was to have led to criminal charges.

The police group was also not Interpol, although Mr. O'Grady said Ecpat had a close working relationship with the international police and shared information.

Mr. O'Grady said his organisation had been considering what to do about Mr. Clarke for nearly six years.

"It has been common knowledge in Sri Lanka for some time and our organisation has discussed Arthur C. Clarke for the last five or six years, whether there was something that could be done," Mr. O'Grady earlier told Radio New Zealand.

Britain's Sunday Mirror at the weekend quoted Mr. Clarke as saying he had sex with boys in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Clarke, aged 80, who wrote the acclaimed "2001: A Space Odyssey" and has lived

in Sri Lanka since 1956, was quoted by the Sunday Mirror as saying: "Once the boys have reached the age of puberty it is OK ... it doesn't do them any harm."

He reportedly added: "I think most of the damage comes from the fuss made by hysterical parents afterwards. If the kids don't mind, fair enough."

Mr. Clarke angrily denied the report, and requested that Buckingham Palace postpone a ceremony scheduled for later this week that was to have seen him invested as a knight of the British monarchy by Prince Charles.

The aged author said in a statement he was "against mucking about with small boys."

"There is no truth in the allegations. I have not been sexually active for more than 20 years," he said.

Mr. O'Grady said that under Sri Lankan law of the time, there was nothing illegal about sexual involvement with young people.

"You can not try him for anything he might have done in earlier years, so we couldn't get very far on that," Mr. O'Grady said.

"Effectively he has not broken the law, not the law in Sri Lanka, but he has broken a certain moral law," he said.

Mr. O'Grady said Mr. Clarke would not have been an obvious target for international exposure, but that changed when he agreed to receive a knighthood.

"If that had not happened I personally would not have had any involvement in it," Mr. O'Grady said.

N. Korean guard crosses border into South

SEOUL (AFP) — A North Korean guard Tuesday crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) to the Southern side at the border town of Panmunjom, a United Nations Command (UNC) spokesman said.

"A KPA (Korean People's Army) member crossed the MDL this morning and it (the incident) is now under investigation," UNC spokesman Jim Coles said. He declined to elaborate on the incident.

Yonhap News Agency said the North Korean guard was identified as Corporal Byun Yong-Kwan who was wearing a North Korean guard's

uniform and carrying a hand gun when he entered the South.

There was no shooting at the time of his crossing around 7:30 a.m. (2230 GMT, Monday), Yonhap said.

It is the first reported case of a North Korean soldier crossing into the South through Panmunjom since the Korean war, although six people have entered the South through the closely guarded area since the war ended in 1953.

The two Koreas have been locked in a tense truce since they signed an armistice agreement at Panmunjom in 1953.



Filipino relatives of the ill-fated Cebu Pacific DC-9 plane wait anxiously at the foot of Mount Sumagaya in southern Philippines (Reuters photo)

Teenage Indonesian maid forced by employers to eat dog droppings

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A 15-year-old Indonesian maid was twice forced by her employers, including a 13-year-old boy, to eat dog droppings for not cleaning up quickly after the dog, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

The maid detailed the

story Monday to a local court along with other forms of abuse that her employers heaped on her since she went to work for them last year, the Straits Times said.

One night in May, the employer's son "told me to eat the dog (droppings)

and he gave me three minutes to eat it. He said that if I did not, he would beat me," the maid, Hartati Ali Sodikun, told the court.

The incident was repeated a few days after. When she emerged from the toilet after washing her

mouth, the son asked her: "Was it delicious?", the report said.

The maid said she slept on old newspapers in the kitchen floor of the luxury apartment and that she was hardly fed. The mother and son would whack her with tennis rackets

when they found out she ate more bread than usual, the report added.

The boy pleaded guilty last month in a juvenile court for burning the maid with a hot iron, scalding her with boiling water and punching her in the forehead, the report said.

Britons offered holidays as U.S. bounty hunters

LONDON (AFP) — British holiday-makers are being offered the chance to spend their break as armed bounty hunters tracking down criminals in the United States, The Daily Telegraph said Tuesday.

Briton Ted Oliver, 47, who was a bounty hunter in

America for 10 years, said in the paper he intended to sell the holidays for £800 (\$1,300) per week this summer.

The Telegraph said tourists would be given black uniforms, bullet-proof vests and semi-automatic pistols. They would also be given a

course in martial arts and handcuffing techniques before accompanying Mr. Oliver on a man-hunt.

The paper added that flights, food and accommodation were not included in the deal, and the tourists would not receive a share of the bounty.

Japan's Aum doomsday cult rebuilding — survey

By Karabakh Armenian
anded they be removed from Azerbaijan's rule and followed to join Armenia or they declared independence as a step to expel thousands of people who had in fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. A fragile 1994 ceasefire came into effect.
r. Ter-Petrosian had concessions in the future, saying they could Armenia repair its devastated economy and avoid international isolation. Mr. Ter-Petrosian says too many Armenians are being killed in the conflict.
r. Kocharyan has the tactical backing of power in Armenia, but Mr. Ter-Petrosian has the army and many Armenians are of meddling in politics.
leading to international pressure, Mr. Ter-Petrosian last year Karabakh did probably have to give for an arrangement which it preserves its independence while remaining part of a state on paper.
under the plan, worked by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, ethnic Armenians would give up Azatlan's conquered Karabakh, allowing peacekeepers to control the area. The formal status was resolved later.
r. Kocharyan and his supporters say the plan does guarantee Karabakh's security. Azerbaijan accepted the proposal.
he unresolved Karabakh government depends greatly on Russian support and is Mr. Kocharyan is a vocal advocate there, he reported.
OSCE plan, support, Mr. Ter-Petrosian.

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Chinese people to have freedom," he said. "It was only under the conditions and the inevitable tide of history, at President Jiang Zemin's initiative, the U.N. Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was signed," he added.
Mr. Qin was first elected in 1981 to edit an in a labour camp for his part in the 1976 democracy movement.
He served a subsequent 10-year term in a labour camp for writing a "peace charter" with other dissidents in 1982, but refused to remain silent. He was released in 1985. Mr. Qin called for a creation of free labour unions within the state to help cope with the economic restructuring and the rapidly state enterprises. Police tried to force him to leave the country, but he resisted and has continued to speak out in favour of democracy.
On Jan. 29, police in Beijing detained him for his part in the New Year festival. But he spoke out again at a 51, calling for more political reform to move the country towards freedom of press, free trade and a multi-party electoral system.



Australian Treasurer Peter Costello delivers a speech during the second day of the constitutional convention at the Old Parliament House in Canberra. Costello Tuesday declared himself a republican, joining a growing list of conservatives in favour of cutting ties with Britain (Reuters photo)

Australian republic still a far-away prospect amid in-fighting

CANBERRA (AFP) — Prospects for an Australian republic by the turn of the century appeared Tuesday to be dimming amid deepening divisions among republicans at the constitutional convention here over the election of a president.
Although leaders of the Australian Republican Movement (ARM) were still confident consensus can be reached — and Prime Minister John Howard has made it a condition of an early referendum — a number of prominent republicans made clear they are not prepared to accept compromise.
They have also accused Malcolm Turnbull, chairman of the ARM which has the biggest convention delegation, of stitching a deal with the monarchist Howard for a head of state elected by a two-thirds majority of parliament.
The issue of whether a president would be popularly elected or appointed by parliament dominated recent debate on Australia's constitutional future and has assumed greater importance at this convention than the more fundamental issue of severing links with Britain.
Although Mr. Howard still favours a constitutional monarchy, he has said he believes the only viable republican model is one in which a president would be elected by a two thirds majority of parliament.
This is also the model favoured by the ARM and, until recently, by a Labour opposition which voted last month to consider an alternative.
But some prominent republican delegates threatened Tuesday to vote with the monarchists if a popularly elected president is not in the preferred republican model.
Former New South Wales and federal independent MP Ted Mack, said he would not stand for anything less than a popularly elected president.
"I think we're seeing an attempt to sort of railroad a predetermined decision through the conference," Mr. Mack said.
"Essentially I want a republic that has some advantages for the Australian public where they've got more participation in government. To me, the bottom line is there must be direct elections.
"If we're going to centralise powers to the parties, of course, I'll vote 'no' with the monarchists."
Another leading republican delegate, Aboriginal magistrate Pat O'Shane, said the ARM wants to deliver to the prime minister the sort of republican model he wants and to which she was strongly opposed.
Asked if consensus support for the ARM's preferred model was possible, O'Shane told ABC radio: "Not if I have my say. I can assure you of that."
Mr. Turnbull was also accused of being patronising and "obnoxious" by Real Republic delegate Moira Rayner after he said she was misguided in trying to widen debate to include other changes to the constitution beyond making Australia a republic.
The crucial issue of what powers an Australian president should have and how they would be defined was the major topic for debate during the second day of the historic convention Tuesday.
Codifying the largely unwritten powers granted the governor-general in the current constitution is one of the greatest areas of division between monarchists and republicans and rival republican groups at the convention.
Deputy opposition leader Gareth Evans said he would argue for a president having a ceremonial role only, especially if popularly elected.
"There's a very strong case for codifying and significantly limiting and indeed eliminating a number of the existing powers," Mr. Evans said. "If you do that, there is still a case for direct election."

India's old fogeys line up for PM's chair

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The leading candidates to become India's next prime minister have one thing in common — age.
Lots of it. Add together the experience of the three front-runners for the post and you have almost two-and-a-half centuries — 231 years to be exact.
Atul Behari Vajpayee, the grey-haired leader of the Hindu nationalist and main opposition party, is 83. His candidature is being pushed by Communist General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, magnificently bearded and aged 81.
All this while leaders elsewhere across the world appear to be getting younger and younger.
Mr. Chopra, like B.G. Verghese, a former editor of the Indian Express newspaper, agree that the older generation in India are paid greater respect than in some other parts of the world.
But for Mr. Verghese, the old guard have also led to a steady atrophy in fresh ideas.
"All the parties are 'status-quo-ists'. Internal Party Democracy is weak. The old loyalists keep coming forward and the older parties just go from one election to another," he argues.
"It's an ailment of most of the parties. They are not getting fresh ideas, the forward vision is not there."
"There may be a bit more respect for age here but people don't want old fogeys here either. Younger people are more concerned about the future," Zoya Hassan, meanwhile, professor of political science at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, argues all is not gloom.
Some younger leaders, armed with laptop computers, are emerging at the head of some state governments, she says.
And, despite grey-haired appearances, official figures show that things have been improving recently.
India's outgoing parliament was the youngest in the country's 50 years of independence. The average age stood at just over 45, compared to almost 53 in the previous parliament — the oldest since 1947.
Nehru was 38 when he became the country's first prime minister. Indira Gandhi was 48 when she came to power and Rajiv, the youngest of all, just 40.
Mr. Chopra says the "missing generation of leaders" dates back to Indira Gandhi and her tendency to "cut everyone down if she expected a threat from them ... the disease spread from Congress to other parties."
Underlining the point, India's Communists, an influential bloc hoping to come to power within a coalition, are projecting Jyoti Basu as their potential prime minister. He is 83. His candidature is being pushed by Communist General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, magnificently bearded and aged 81.
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Indian PM calls off visit to Kashmir site of Eid killings

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral has cancelled a visit to a Kashmiri village where nine Muslims were killed by troops on the Islamic holiday of Eid Al Fitr, officials said Tuesday.
An official spokesman for the Kashmir state government said Mr. Gujral's trip Tuesday to Kadrana, some 200 kilometres from Jammu, had been put off because of "bad weather."
The state's chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, however, would still undertake the visit.
Soldiers opened fire on a crowd in Kadrana on Jan. 31 after a failed attempt to arrest two separatist militant suspects.
Seven men, a woman and a child died and about 10 people were wounded. The army said they were forced to open fire after being attacked by a mob.
Police sources here said intelligence reports suggested there could be protests if Mr. Gujral went to the village.
More than 20,000 people have died in Muslim separatist violence in the disputed Himalayan state since 1989. Some separatists are demanding independence, others merger with Pakistan.
New Delhi accuses Pakistan, which holds the northern third of the territory, of fuelling the rebellion against Indian rule. Islamabad says its support is limited to diplomacy.
Muslim-majority Kashmir has sparked two wars between India and Pakistan since 1947. Islamabad wants a U.N.-brokered referendum to decide the future of the territory.

Kenyan opposition MPs to disrupt parliament over tribal massacres

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan opposition members of parliament have said they will disrupt the opening of parliament Tuesday to force the government to halt "genocide" in the country's Rift Valley province.
More than 100 people have been killed by armed raiders targeting mainly members of the opposition-supporting Kikuyu ethnic group in the province, since Jan. 14.
Hundreds of homes have been torched during the attacks, said to have been perpetrated by members of President Daniel Arap Moi's Kalenjin tribe.
"We are seized by our responsibility as national leaders to protect the lives and property of all Kenyans," the MPs said in a statement.
The also called for a general strike in Nairobi Wednesday in memory of the "victims of the genocide."
Opposition and church leaders have accused the government of instigating the raids against Kikuyus, who voted overwhelmingly for the opposition in general elections at the end of December, to punish them and force them to move out before the next elections in 2002.
Tuesday's parliamentary session has been convened to elect a speaker and a deputy speaker and swear in the newly elected members.



Police arrest a protester near Kenya's parliament after disrupting a demonstration in the city streets. About five people were arrested and several others injured when police forcefully broke-up the protest, called to pressure the government to end tribal clashes which have killed more than 100 people in the Rift Valley (Reuters photo)

Texas poised to execute Karla Faye Tucker

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AFP) — Death-row inmate Karla Faye Tucker began the countdown to her execution Tuesday as she awaited word on her last-ditch attempt to avoid death.
With only hours to go until the scheduled execution, her only hope for life laid with the U.S. Supreme Court, and with Texas Governor George Bush who can order a one-time reprieve of 30 days.
Ms. Tucker lost a last-minute appeal for clemency Monday where the state Board of Pardons and Paroles turned down the convicted pickax murderer's bid to have her death sentence commuted to life in prison, or to at least delay the execution for 90 days.
She is scheduled to die by lethal injection at 6:00 p.m. (0000 GMT Wednesday).
"I am not afraid of dying. I know where I'm going. Jesus has already gone to prepare a place for me," Ms. Tucker told a Christian television programme.
Ms. Tucker says she is a born-again Christian.
One of Ms. Tucker's lawyers David Boisford said his client remained "upbeat."
"Her faith in the Lord has not been disturbed one iota," he told reporters.
Ms. Tucker, whose case has drawn international attention, would be the first woman executed in Texas since 1863 and the first in the United States in 14 years.
She was sentenced to die over the grisly 1983 murder of a Texas couple.
Monday Ms. Tucker, 38, was taken by aeroplane from her cell in Mountain View, Texas to the Huntsville prison where she was scheduled to die.
Prison spokesman David Nunley said several members of Ms. Tucker's family including her father, sister and grandmother visited her at the prison. Mr. Nunley said Ms. Tucker has requested a banana, peaches, salad and toast for her last meal.
Mr. Bush has been flooded with more than 2,500 letters, the vast majority of them from supporters of Ms. Tucker and most from outside Texas, plus another barrage of faxes, E-mail messages and phone calls.
Ms. Tucker could avoid death Tuesday if the U.S. Supreme Court steps in. Last week her attorneys urged the high court to take up her case, arguing that Texas' law on pardons was meaningless because in 20 years no one has ever been granted a pardon in the state.
After the state panel's ruling, a spokeswoman for the governor said Mr. Bush would be briefed by his attorneys while awaiting the Supreme Court decision.
"Governor Bush does not anticipate making a final decision until the Supreme Court rules on this legal challenge," spokeswoman Karen Hughes said.
The Supreme Court recently agreed to hear a similar case involving a condemned man in Ohio.
Ms. Tucker, who has admitted killing a Houston couple with an accomplice, has given interviews to all the major U.S. television networks in a successful bid to focus the public's attention on her case. The accomplice died in prison.
Viewers have become fascinated by this smiling, articulate woman — sexually abused as a child and high on drugs and alcohol at the time of the killings — who has repented, married the prison pastor and embraced Christianity.
Ms. Tucker said she has experienced a religious conversion in prison and wants her sentence commuted on the grounds that she is no longer the person who got sexual pleasure from stabbing people to death.
The last woman put to death in the United States was Velma Barfield. Convicted of killing her fiancée, she was executed by lethal injection on Nov. 2, 1984 in North Carolina. Like Ms. Tucker, she said she had a religious conversion in prison.
Last year Texas put to death 37 men — the highest number since 1935, when some 28 went to the now-outlawed electric chair.



Condemned killer Karla Faye smiles in the Mountain View Unit in Gatesville, Texas, December 97 (Reuters photo)

U.S. trial of drug baron's decorators opens

NEW YORK (AFP) — Two Americans who worked as interior decorators for a Colombian drug lord pleaded innocent Monday on charges of money-laundering.
Alexander Blarek, 36, and Frank Pellechia, 49, are charged with conspiring to launder more than \$10 million in cocaine sales profits generated in the United States by a drug operation headed by José Santacruz Londoño.
Santacruz Londoño — who was believed to be the largest cocaine distributor in the New York area — was shot and killed by Colombian police in 1996 after breaking out of prison.
Mr. Blarek and Mr. Pellechia, co-owners of a thriving decorating business in San Francisco, were arrested in June by Drug Enforcement Agency agents and brought to New York.
According to a 29-page indictment, their main client between 1979 and 1996 was Santacruz Londoño, one of the three leaders of the infamous Cali drug cartel.
"Londoño couldn't spend his money ... the money had to be laundered, he needed people to spend it for him and these two men did it for him," said prosecutor Mark Lerner.
DEA agent Kenneth Robinson testified that he had warned Mr. Blarek in 1982 that Santacruz Londoño was a drug trafficker. The decorator said he believed his client to be a wealthy Colombian businessman who had made his fortune in real estate. Prosecutors say the defendants decorated at least 10 properties for Santacruz Londoño, including houses for him and his wife, another for his mistress, a country home and several offices.
Defense lawyers said Mr. Blarek and Mr. Pellechia did spend millions of dollars of the late drug baron's money but denied they engaged in laundering.
"They are not racketeers, they are not drug dealers, they are interior decorators," said Mr. Pellechia's attorney Paul Shechtman. If convicted, Mr. Blarek and Mr. Pellechia could face up to 40 years for each count of conspiring to launder money.

Jordan Times

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How solutions work

IF THE threat of a military strike against Iraqi targets materialises into the use of substantial forces, and all indications that it will, Jordan stands to suffer the second heaviest losses after Iraq. Not only could our oil supplies be disrupted, our substantial trade with Iraq would most certainly be damaged as well. More than that, a new military conflagration in the Gulf could force countless thousands of Iraqis, from the centre and the south, to flee across the border, further straining this country's limited capacity to cope with the influx of refugees.

This is why perhaps HRH Crown Prince Hassan found it necessary to warn against the consequences of escalation on the Iraqi front in an interview broadcast on Jordan Television two days ago.

But if this is not enough to convince the world of why Jordan would like a peaceful end to the current crisis between Iraq and the U.N., let the international community also be aware that the possible use of mass-destruction weapons, which is in fact at the heart of the standoff, could hurt us the most, especially since we are in no way prepared for the outbreak of chemical and biological wars in our neighbourhood.

While these genuine fears and trepidations justify fully Jordan's call for a diplomatic solution, His Majesty the King's and the Crown Prince's public statements on the situation over Iraq spell out clearly the terms upon which a way out of the potentially devastating mess can be found. Just as Jordan has seen faults with the way the U.S. has been handling the conflict with Iraq following the brutal invasion of Kuwait in 1990, we have also found the Iraqi leadership at fault in not doing enough to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the U.N. boycott.

The Saddam Hussein regime cannot claim that Iraq's sovereignty will be violated if the U.N. is allowed to inspect scores of presidential palaces, when in fact the whole country's sovereignty is threatened and impinged upon by the seven-year-old sanctions. Iraq has already covered a great distance in its cooperation with the U.N. inspection teams and it only has to satisfy the U.N. officials that it has no biological weapons left in its stockpile, a requirement that is shared by all countries in the region.

Meanwhile, the U.N. must build on its proposal to increase Iraq's oil-for-food programme to \$5 billion every six months by assuring Baghdad that once it satisfied the U.N. demands for the elimination of mass-destruction weapons, the crippling sanctions will be lifted altogether.

To that end we welcome all efforts made by Russia, the Europeans, Turkey, Iran and the Arab League to find a mutual formula acceptable to both Iraq and the Security Council. The U.S., for its part, can open a dialogue with Baghdad, just as it had done with other countries under similar circumstances, and achieve in the process a political breakthrough.

Jordan will not be the only country to gain from a happy ending to this crisis. The peoples of the region and the antagonists themselves will find in it some real benefits.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh addressed the potential dangers to Jordan if the U.S. launches a military strike on Iraq urging the government to take action at all levels and rally the Arabs to prevent such an aggression. Dr. Faneh said, if Iraq is again exposed to a military strike, then Jordan's oil supplies will be cut, forcing the Kingdom to purchase its oil needs from Saudi Arabia at a cost of \$600 million annually. In addition Jordan's exports to Iraq will be halted and the Kingdom will lose some \$300 million annually. Worst of all, according to Dr. Faneh, Jordan will be flooded by tens of thousands of refugees fleeing the scene of devastation or conflict in Iraq. Jordan is not an ally of Iraq or other states in the region and does not harbour enmity to others, but a military strike against Iraq will deal a devastating blow to the Jordanian economy and will cripple the country, he warned. For this reason, said the writer, the government should spare no effort in rallying Arab countries' support for an end to tension through diplomatic efforts via the Arab League. He said Jordan cannot stand by and watch the Iraqi nation annihilated and its own future ruined.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Daoud criticised the government for only verbally addressing the problems of incompetence in public administration offices and not taking any meaningful and effective steps to actually deal with the situation. Daoud claimed that in the past few months the government laid off some of its employees but hired others, and in both cases termination of people's work and the appointment of others was not based on the principle of improving the system since many of those given jobs were either relatives or friends of officials in high positions. The writer said the laid off employees increased the number of unemployed and complicated matters further. He said that only by opening the door to and encouraging investments can many of the country's ills be addressed. Furthermore, he said, overstuffed government departments can transfer their civil servants to another, and employees can be given training courses to better their performance. He said investments designed to improve the economy require a sound public administrative system.

Washington Watch

The scandal and the conspiracy

By Dr. James Zogby

THE SCANDAL that has been consuming Washington during the past ten days may well have been fed by a conspiracy. However, it is not the conspiracy widely believed by many in the Arab World and in parts of the Arab American community.

Since the story of the president's alleged affair with a White House employee broke in the midst of his meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and resulted in diverting significant attention from the peace process, it has appeared to some that the entire episode was a ploy engineered to weaken Clinton's efforts to pursue the peace process. This is what I have heard from friends, Arab intellectuals and policy and opinion makers, as well as a flood of callers to my office and my TV and radio shows.

It is only slightly ironic that coexisting with the view is the speculation that the president, faced with this scandal, may now be forced to take military action against Iraq in order to divert public attention from his domestic difficulties.

There is, however, little evidence to support either view. In fact, if there is any conspiracy at all, it may well be the one first lady Hillary Clinton suggested when she pointed to a five-year effort by "forces on the far right" that has been trying to destroy her husband's presidency.

Kenneth Starr, for example, the conservative Independent Counsel, is at the centre of Mrs. Clinton's allegation. He has, since assuming his post three years ago, spent over \$30 million (of taxpayer dollars) in a determined effort to charge Bill Clinton with a crime and have him removed from office. During this period, Starr has investigated the alleged scandal involving the Arkansas land-deal known as "Whitewater"; the allegation that Mrs. Clinton withheld information from his investigation into questionable billing practices by her old law firm; the allegation that a White House employee and friend of the Clinton's did not, as the police reported, commit suicide; alleged improprieties in the firing of employees of the White House travel office; and the improper use by a White House employee of secret FBI employment records of former Bush administration appointees. To date, despite extending his mandate well beyond its original purpose, to investigate "the Whitewater affair," Starr has been unable to find any offence with which to indict either the president or the first lady.

Far from ending his investigation, each failure has only prompted Starr to look for new offences. In the current alleged scandal, Starr has connected with the right-wing funded and supported Paula Jones sex-harassment suit against the president. This has prompted the first lady and other supporters of the president to charge that Starr is no longer investigating, but is pursuing a politically motivated vendetta to get the president.

In this vein, Starr's efforts do not stand alone. The National Taxpayer Union recently issued a study showing that in the past three years, the Congress has spent over \$190 million to investigate various charges against the White House. In all, there have been 20 Senate and House committees looking into a wide range of allegations.

Therefore, if there is a conspiracy to weaken the president, the obvious place to look, as the first lady suggests,

is to those who have been working so hard to destroy Clinton since he was elected.

Another observation that can be made that runs counter to the theory that the current White House scandal is the result of those out to damage the Middle East peace effort is that there has not been any observable change in U.S. Middle East policy.

Just this week, for example, the president issued an impressive Eid Al Fitr message to the Muslim World in which he reiterated his support for the Palestinian right "to live as a free people" — a formula which has been praised by the Palestinian leadership and roundly criticised by hardline Israelis. In the same greeting, the president responded affirmatively to the recent overture extended to the United States by Iranian President Khatami. Clinton spoke of U.S. "regret over the estrangement of our two nations" and praised Iran as "an important country with a rich and ancient heritage." He indicated that problems that currently exist between the United States and Iran "are not insurmountable" and welcomed "more exchanges between our peoples." These views will not be received positively by hardline supporters of Israel in the United States who are determined to reject any opening to Iran.

The effort to pursue the peace process will continue as well — but in much the same manner it has since Madrid. The United States has never used overt and decisive pressure against Israel — the kind that the Arab World would like to see used and the kind we know Israel deserves given its illegal and intransigent behaviour. However, this has nothing to do with the current scandal.

It is not necessary to mythologise about the hidden power of an all-powerful lobby to explain the absence of pressure on Israel — it is a function of real politics in the U.S. political system.

Moreover, in the case of Iraq, the administration's stance vis-a-vis with that country has been clear for months now. They have threatened to use force long before there was the hint of a scandal.

The real danger presented by the current scandal in Washington is not that it will change U.S. policy towards the peace process or that it will prompt the White House to use force against Iraq. The danger is that either Netanyahu or Saddam Hussein will misread the current situation and refuse to alter their policies — in the case of Netanyahu, resulting in the destruction of the peace process, and in the case of Saddam Hussein, bringing on a tragic confrontation that will only add to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

There are some disturbing, and some interesting, additional observations that can be made from the developments of the past ten days.

The real scandal of this period, I believe, has been the feeding frenzy that was generated by a wild and reckless U.S. media. First, it must be noted that the entire sordid story has been based on three sources: the illegally and secretly obtained tapes of Monica Lewinsky's communications with Linda Tripp; rumours about the contents of the president's and Lewinsky's secret depositions in the Paula Jones lawsuit; and Washington-based gossip and unfounded stories.

It is evident from reading just the few published pages

of transcripts of the Lewinsky tapes that Tripp, although pretending to be her friend, was in fact maliciously coaxing her to say more in order to trap her into providing allegations against the president. A little-reported fact is that while these tapes remain the major source of the story of the scandal, only a few reporters from one magazine have actually heard them, and they have heard only one-tenth of them. All of the reporting that has occurred is based on rumours and allegations of what various reporters have been told are on those tapes. This is hardly responsible journalism.

The Washington press corps has behaved badly. They salivated over any sensational rumour and reported it as fact, subjecting American homes to unprecedented salaciousness for hours each day. The result of this non-stop barrage of sex-filled commentary has been to create a backlash against the press itself. Too many details of the story have already been proven to be false: there was no secret service agent who caught the president and Lewinsky; there is no stained dress; and Lewinsky didn't give the president the tie he wore at the 1997 State of the Union.

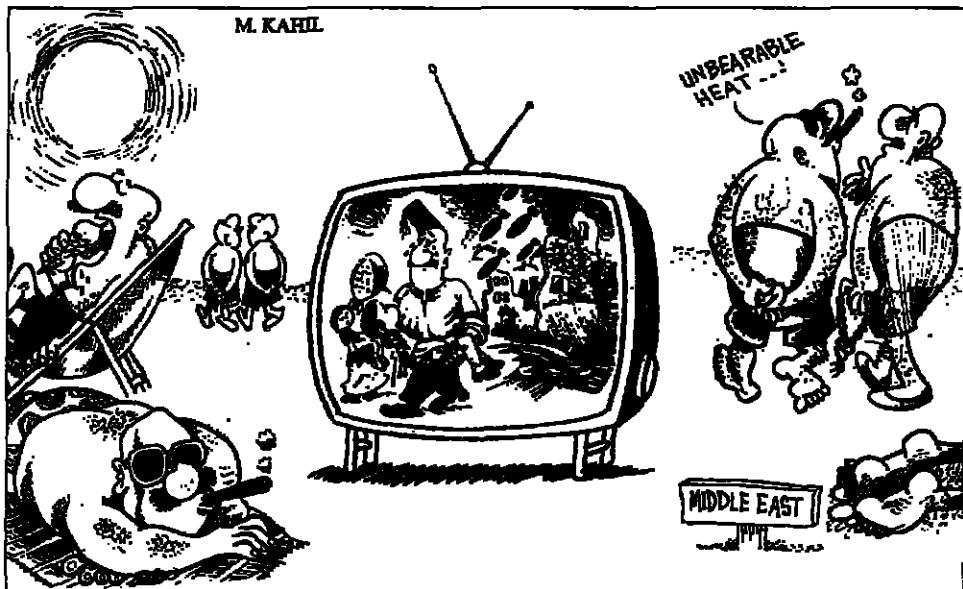
The president has vigorously denied the charges and his wife has joined in strongly supporting her husband. However, in Washington today, it has become a sign of sophistication to be cynical and disrespectful. It is not allegations about the president's character that has fed the disrespectful jokes made by popular TV comics. The same kinds of jokes are told by the same comics about Attorney General Janet Reno, about whom there are no allegations of impropriety.

The same media that last year interrupted the president's State of the Union message to report on the O.J. Simpson verdict, this year abandoned its coverage of the Middle East peace talks and the Pope's historic visit to Cuba in order to devote 10 to 12 hours a day to speculate on an alleged sex scandal. The preoccupation of the U.S. press with sex and sensationalism is the scandal we should be discussing.

The president told me last week that we needed to be patient and confident and that he needed to continue to focus on the work he was elected to carry out. He appears to be doing just that and the American people are responding affirmatively.

When the story first broke last week, according to one poll, the president was enjoying a high favourability rating of 60 per cent. After the first few days of non-stop press frenzy, his rating dropped to 56 per cent. The press began to boast that the president's support was eroding. But, following the State of the Union message, the president's rating has shot up to an unprecedented 67 per cent.

The polls also show, however, that the public is somewhat, and understandably, confused. On the one hand, they are uncertain about the charges against the president being fed an almost daily dose of scandal for ten days now. On the other hand, they like this president and respect his performance in leading the country. Moreover, in the end, as it has been in the past two elections and in Clinton's entire career in office, it appears that it is his performance as president that counts most with the public.



LETTERS

Blinded by anger

To the editor:

IN REFERENCE to the letter headlined "Where is the honour" (Jordan Times, Jan. 25, 1998), I would like to applaud Tammy Summy on her views.

It is refreshing to see that there are people around who think the way she does.

Because we are living in an Arab society, I like Ms. Summy have come across people who tell stories about stabbing and shooting of girls and women to regain family honour, stories that go like this: "Did you hear about that girl? Her cousin shot her, and she really deserved it."

There certainly are other ways to resolve these problems. Deep in my heart, I never ever agreed to the concept of honour killing. I think it is so uncivilised and evil. Those who commit such crimes are blinded by their anger

and it's as if Satan is occupying their minds. But one day they will regret it so much.

Everybody makes mistakes — I realise that some are much bigger than others, but hey...look at Clinton!! And he is the MAN of the United States of America!! Like Ms. Summy said, life needs to be cherished, everyone needs to understand this.

It seems to be a norm to end your daughter's life when such a situation occurs; does it make those who take these lives feel macho or what? Well I know this, no matter how good it makes them feel, it will be very temporary. They will forever suffer a pain in their heart that will continuously cut like a knife...they will never be happy.

Reem Madanat
Long Beach, California
USA.

Israel shows contrasting approaches to 'threats' from Iraq, Iran

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — There has been a stark difference between the way Israel has been dealing publicly with the alleged threat of "weapons of mass destruction" that are or will imminently be in the possession of Iran and Iraq, the two Gulf countries straddling the world's largest concentration of oil and gas.

Analysts here have provided little plausible explanation about Israel's low-key reaction to the standoff with Iraq's Saddam Hussein over free access to U.N. weapons inspectors, a situation that is threatening to explode in military strikes on Iraq within "weeks," according to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who has been on a world trip "explaining" the uncompromising American position.

One of Israel's foremost experts on Iraq who served as adviser to several Israeli prime ministers, Amatzia Baram, said here recently that Israel feels it can do "nothing politically" about Iraq's non-conventional weapons programme.

Baram, a professor of Middle Eastern History at Haifa University and at present a visiting fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, says the Israeli authorities feel, "We can leave this job to the Americans and Brits."

In fact, he continued, "there is a school of thought in Israel that feels Israel is better off with Saddam Hussein in place because everybody knows he is dangerous but under control."

Israel has been assured during Albright's stopover in Jerusalem that the United States would stand by Israel if it were threatened by an Iraqi attack, an assurance which allowed Israel to take a back seat to the looming showdown between Baghdad and Washington. The U.S. response would be "swift and forceful" if Iraq launched any missiles on Israel or any other country in the Middle East, she promised.

Subsequently, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu imposed a gag order on all cabinet members and senior officials on the situation with Iraq. The only exception was Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who, along with his subordinates, was said to have been discounting the likelihood of an Iraqi attack since in their opinion Iraq has no more than several missiles armed with non-conventional warheads.

This Israeli view of Iraq contrasts sharply with the one presented at a background briefing here on Iran's efforts to acquire long-range missiles from Russia by a senior aide who accompanied Netanyahu during last month's talks with President Clinton on reviving the comatose Middle East peace process.

"The Iranian programme could be completed in a matter of a year, plus or minus a few months," he warned.

The Israeli aide began by acknowledging that his country is at present part of an international effort aimed at containing proliferation in weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, but made no mention of Iraq or

his government's own nuclear capabilities. He only pointed to the efforts against Iran, which he described as a "country whose motivations and capabilities are... in a position to project power beyond its immediate vicinity and through the acquisition of strategic weapons."

If this happens it could be "catastrophic for the Middle East and regional stability," he declared, although one Israeli present at the briefing questioned all that hype about Iranian missiles since he thought it unlikely that they would attack Tel Aviv as propagated.

The approach that Israel undertook against this Iranian effort, he continued, was to seek the assistance of the United States in stopping the flow of Russian technology to Iran.

But if this trend continues, he added, and the effort to contain it fails, then "at the end of the day Israel's search and quest for stability and security may compel it... to devise and develop... capabilities which are now potentially present." He did not elaborate, but the impression was that he was referring to Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal.

The senior Israeli official, whose name could not be disclosed under the terms of the briefing, accused Russian firms of being in collusion with the Iranian authorities since mid-1996 in building that country's missile programme.

After early denials by the Russian government, the issue was taken up at the highest level of the U.S. and Russian governments.

He credited the threat of sanctions raised by the usually pro-Israel American Congress and the efforts of U.S. Vice President Al Gore and President Clinton — in that order — who wrote a series of letters to the Russian leadership compelling the Russian leadership to change its mind.

"We thought that by mid-January the moment of truth would come because it would become clear whether the Russians are getting the message or not," he said.

Although the situation is not all that "unambiguous," he continued, the Russians have taken action to curtail the activities of the Russian firms. "However, we do not know and we are not sure whether this action, this intensive action by the Russian authorities, implies an earnest move to stop that cooperation (with the Iranians)."

Netanyahu's aide said it would take "a few more weeks" for Israel to make its own assessment — "and to make it known."

Russian participation and contributions are reported essential for the Iranian missile programme, he said, but "if this is arrested in time it could have a significant effect" in derailing the Iranian effort.

"We are in a race against time," he stressed, pointing to the large number of Russian firms that are involved in the effort. He pointed out that two engine testings were held last December. "I do not remember such intensity in the past which suggests that they could be accelerating the programme. In that case we cannot wait for long."

James Zogby
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Features/News

Former S. African student activist to become 'your excellency'

South Africa's new High Commissioner-designate in London is a former student activist who was tortured in an apartheid jail and later escaped assassination by a military death squad. *Guvin Evans profiles a diplomat with a radical past.*

LONDON — The woman whose hand Nelson Mandela once raised at a rally and said "Here is your next president" is about to take up the post of High Commissioner in London.

Few diplomats have such a radical past. Eighteen years ago, Cheryl Carolus was the embodiment of the revolutionary ideal: a black, street-wise, working class, feminist intellectual.

Almost all her student radicals were impressed by what she said and the way she said it, hard-hitting and humorous, full of rolling r's and profanities. "She was the golden girl of the [liberation] movement," recalls Jagrid Falck, a British television director who worked with her in the early 1980s. "She was really inspiring and a brilliant orator, but she was warm and friendly and there was nothing of the designer revolutionary about her."

Her childhood was pockmarked by the banishment of "coloureds" from Cape Town's "white areas," and she and her three sisters were raised with an acute sense of injustice, though neither their printer's assistant father or their nurse's aide mother were politicians.

At high school she dreamed of becoming an actress but she took to the political stage by joining a radical school group.

In 1976, while studying law at the University of the Western Cape, she was detained for five months and tortured, but recently declined to give evidence about the episode to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which is looking into apartheid-era human rights abuses. "There are ordinary people with far worse stories to tell," she explained.

Imprisonment, however, confirmed her life's path: "There was no way I could retain my dignity without fighting back. I didn't get involved in politics — I got involved in life."

She worked as a teacher, tried her hand as a poet and author, and organised her local communities while drinking the men under the table.

Two years after marrying an accountant, she was elected regional general secretary of the United Democratic Front, launched as a front for the banned African National Congress (ANC). Her marriage collapsed.

During the subsequent state of emergency, most leaders kept their heads down when the youths confronted the armoured cars. Not Carolus. A fellow activist recalls: "She had a strong sense of herself as one of the people and could communicate with ordinary people better than any of us, so when the kids were throwing stones and petrol bombs she joined them on the barricades."

She was grabbed by the security police again and "banned" under the emergency regulations. She rejected the option of exile, explaining that she feared

"apartheid would last forever and so I'd have to leave for more than 20 years."

Instead, she went into hiding, using various disguises — including dressing as a man. It later emerged that a military death squad had targeted her for assassination in this period.

Recruited into the Communist Party, she later became one of its internal leaders, though today her views are humanist pink rather than Marxist red.

"I didn't arrive at socialism by intellectual debate, but because I came from a working class community and understood the roots of poverty," she explained.

In 1990, after a 15-year friendship, she married Graeme Bloch, a white activist who is now a senior bureaucrat.

'[Cheryl Carolus] always manages to stay within the loop because she can combine speaking very frankly with a keen sense of what is politic, and on top of that she's young, she's energetic and she's definitely cool.'

On their wedding day, the ANC issued a tongue-in-cheek directive: "No children for five years — there's too much work to be done." She recently explained to a friend why she had kept this faith: "Too many progressives have mixed-up kids. I feel very strongly that anyone who has the arrogance to willfully create another human being should accept unqualified responsibility to invest in them."

When Mandela was released from jail, Carolus was included in the ANC's negotiating team and handed responsibility for coordinating party policy. She was on the fast track for a senior cabinet position, so it came as a shock when she said she was not available to stand for parliament.

When Mandela's angry exhortations about "indiscipline" failed, he made an offer: a cabinet position of her choice. Carolus refused him again and provides a compendium of rationales — "selfishness," not knowing what she wants to be when she "grows up" and an aversion to "career politics." But there was more to it.

"She made a big mistake," a senior government official told me. "What she failed to realise was that once you win in a parliamentary system, access to power centres around the government and is sucked away from the party."

Many of those who accepted cabinet posts were less able than her, and enjoyed the material largesse of political power. Carolus took a different path. As one friend put it: "She works harder than anyone I know — often 'til 2 a.m. and then up at five o'clock to go jogging — so they tolerate her while always looking for fault because, when it comes down to it, the ANC is a traditional organisation with huge

levels of prejudice against women leaders, particularly if they're not African."

She was appointed ANC acting general secretary in 1986 and had to straddle the growing gap between the party and government, either playing the party hack, defending controversial policies and disciplining errant members, or acting as the members' watchdog through criticising the government.

She successfully opposed cabinet ministers when they refused to assist the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's investigations into ANC detention camp atrocities, castigated Winnie Mandela for "improper and cowardly" behaviour and publicly offered the country's education minister several "friendly words of criticism."

Late last year she told Mandela she would be standing down at the party's end-of-year conference. She explained: "I always believe in clean cuts — take your chewing gum off the bedpost, say 'Bye-bye ducky' and off you go."

Mandela was sympathetic, saying that while he did not fully understand, he wanted her to be happy. He offered the London posting.

Most of her South African associates insist she will flourish. Said one close friend: "When I first heard, I laughed. Cheryl? I mean she's not someone to be embarrassed if she comes into a meeting in her tracksuit, still sweaty after her run, so I can't quite picture her being ever so polite with the Lords and Ladies. But, then again, she has immense charm so she'll do fine."

Or as an old underground cell member, Tony Karon, put it: "She always manages to stay within the loop because she can combine speaking very frankly with a keen sense of what is politic, and on top of that she's young, she's energetic and she's definitely cool."

But she still retains the habit of calling her people "comrade" and describes herself as the "worst diplomat in the world." She may have succumbed to a natterier hair, style and acquired a taste for sharp outfits, but it will take some effort to get used to curtsying to Queen Elizabeth, wooing quick-buck investors and swapping her modest home in crime-filled Kensington, Johannesburg, for the safer splendours of "Highveld," the High Commissioner's residence in Kensington, London.

But perhaps it's a fair match: for Tony Blair's "new" Britain, one of the brightest faces of the "new" South Africa; for 40-year-old Carolus, a fresh angle on the world, a break from the unforgiving 90-hour week and a chance to indulge in her love of jazz music and late night revelry.

And just maybe, when the pull of home becomes irresistible, she will finally allow what she calls her "passion for politics" to take her down the path Nelson Mandela proposed for her seven years ago. But perhaps that's too much to ask — Gemini News

The writer is a freelance journalist currently based in London and worked for many years in South Africa.

Gemini News Service

German wine undergoes red revolution

By Mark John Reuters

DERNAU, Germany — German wine, as everyone knows, is summed up like this: there are Riesling whites, which can be very good, and there are Liebfraunlich whites — which can be nose-wrinklingly awful.

German red wine, of course, simply does not figure. Or rather it didn't, until a quiet revolution began producing German reds that for the first time stand comparison with the best from France.

The revolution is directed from cellars like that of Werner Naekel, one of a handful of German red wine specialists whose produce can now command unheard-of prices at home and abroad.

"We started from scratch. There was absolutely no genuine red wine tradition here to speak of," said Naekel, a former schoolteacher who 15 years ago took over his parents' wine business in Dernaau, a village in the Ahr Valley wine region close to Germany's border with Belgium.

That is not to say German red wine did not exist. But what was often produced using the same methods as for white wine. The result was a thin, insipid liquid that critics would politely describe as "quaffing wine."

Nothing could be further from the deep,

powerful flavours emanating from Naekel's flagship wine, known as "S," which owes much to an apprenticeship the German served among the top producers in Burgundy and in Italy's Piedmont region.

Naekel returned to the Ahr with methods that had rarely been seen in Germany. Everything was new, from the fermentation process through to the use of smaller barrels. Crucially, the volume of wine he would seek to yield from his grapes was cut dramatically.

The result is that "S," which in recent vintages has been sold out before it has even been bottled, now changes hands in auctions for several hundred marks a bottle — compared to its 48 mark (\$26.21) retail price.

Gaining international respect

Aside from Naekel, other German labels such as Heger, Philipp and Knipser are all gaining international respect that few would have thought possible only years ago.

A mark of their new seriousness is that the German foreign ministry's protocol department — which for years relied on classic French reds at state banquets — now exclusively offers German vintages with the main course.

For the wider retail market, however, the

problem is that production of the new-generation reds is so limited that prices are going through the roof.

"On an international level, German (red) wine is too expensive at the moment," said Joel Payne, wine critic and co-author of a German wine guide (Weinguide Deutschland '98) published by the French food and wine bible Gault Millau.

That is not deterring some foreign buyers — particularly from Asia — who are prepared to pay a substantial premium for the novelty of top-quality German red wine.

"But as more good wine is produced, supply will catch up with demand and prices will fall," Payne added.

According to the German Wine Federation, an extra 3,000 hectares (7,410 acres) were given over to red wine production from 1990 to 1996 — still leaving red grapes accounting for just a fifth of Germany's total 105,000 vineyard hectareage.

Despite evidence of increased planting of red grapes last year, Naekel says he and the other red specialists need not be too concerned about increased competition as more producers climb on the bandwagon.

"Wine, thank God, is not like potatoes that you can plant one year and reap the next. If you replant grapes, you don't have any wine at all for four years — and even after that, you don't know what you are going to get."

Paper confiscations are delaying tactic — newspaper publishers

(Continued from page 1)

official channels of the High Court's ruling," Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi said on Monday. "Once the government has been informed, the prime minister will issue an executive order to the concerned authorities, who will implement it," he said.

Speaking at a regular press briefing following Tuesday's Cabinet meeting, the minister rejected claims by journalists and lawyers that the confiscation was illegal.

"It is only a matter of days... but some journalists did not wait for the decision to reach us... the press is rushing things, and this is the cause of the problem," Dr. Mutawi stated.

The government maintains that the High Court's rulings are not retroactive, and thus its decision to revoke the licences of 13 weeklies is still standing. But the often unruly weeklies, which have long opposed the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, disagreed.

Mr. Hroub told the Jordan Times that his newspaper will abide by the government's order for now, but added that he was going to contact a team of lawyers to fight back and seek compensation for financial losses.

"The government's decision is wrong and against Article 26 of the High Court's statute, which stipulates that High Court's verdicts are final and cannot be appealed," Mr. Hroub told the Jordan Times.

Officials have said the government, taken by surprise, plans to contest the High Court's ruling.

But it has not yet decided whether it will approach the Court of Cassation, which acts as a Constitutional Court, or the Higher Council — chaired by the Senate speaker and comprising five senators and five senior judges from the Court of Cassation.

Meanwhile, the Lower House's 12-member National Guidance Committee (NGC), which is now examining the government's amendments for their passage as ordinary law, appeared inclined to return the revisions to the government.

"The draft law is now before the NGC, which is entitled to decide whether to send it back to the government, amend it, or add to it. But the government cannot withdraw it [the draft], because it now belongs to the House," Dr. Mutawi explained.

"Again, it will be a matter of

days," he added.

The future of the amended law is expected to be the focus of discussion when the Lower House meets today.

The High Court said the introduction of a temporary law was unconstitutional since there was no state of emergency or necessitating circumstances for the government to change the previous law.

The amendments, widely opposed by political parties, unions and independent personalities, were described by a U.S.-based human rights group as putting freedom of expression "under siege."

They introduced prohibitive capital requirements for dailies and weeklies, increased the list of topics forbidden to be reported, and stipulated harsh penalties for violations of the law.

Jordan will not allow refugees from Iraq into its territories

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan did not have the capabilities of hosting new waves of refugees.

Dr. Mutawi told journalists that during yesterday's Cabinet session Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Hourani briefed the ministers on the country's oil reserves status.

He said that Jordan has enough oil to last in the whole period of the crisis, but declined to say for how many days.

He said that Jordan contacted several Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, to provide the Kingdom with its requirements of fuel in case the flow of oil from Iraq was interrupted.

Dr. Mutawi said that Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayez Tarawneh discussed with Saudi officials the re-opening of the old oil

pipeline that links Jordan with Saudi Arabia.

Prince Hassan has said in the TV interview that Jordan had "no alternatives to Iraqi oil. If we think about receiving oil from other countries it will take one month to maintain and clean the existing pipeline."

An Amman-based diplomat however, said that if oil supplies from Iraq were stopped, Jordan can import oil from Saudi Arabia in tanker trucks from the Red Sea port of Yanbu.

The diplomat, who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times that an agreement was worked out between the two neighbouring states in the past few days.

He added that according to the deal, Jordan will not receive preferential rate for the Saudi oil but will have to buy it at international prices.

Jordan currently pays less than the world market price for the Iraqi oil. Iraq supplies the Kingdom with 90,000 barrels of oil daily under a special U.N. permission.

Economists said that such importing of Saudi oil will certainly be expensive but will in no way harm the country's foreign currency reserve, which stands currently at \$1.8 billion. Minister Mutawi, however, said that the government was in contact with several countries and international institutions to help the Kingdom meet any urgent requirements.

The minister said that Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Sa'eed Sahaf is expected to visit Amman for talks with Jordanian officials on the crisis. He did not give a date for the visit.

Meanwhile, Jordanian

opposition parties are planning a procession for Friday as part of their campaign in support of Iraq, an opposition source told the Jordan Times.

The source, who asked not to be named, said that the rally will start after the Friday prayers from Al Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman, to Al Hashimiyeh Square.

He was not clear if the authorities have approved the peaceful procession as required by law.

The source said that the opposition parties will hold similar rallies in Irbid, Zarqa and Balqa.

He said that parties agreed to form a delegation to head to Syria to meet with Syrian President Hafez Assad and press him to show more support for Iraq in its crisis with the United States.

Iraq, Iran Iraq invites congressmen to Baghdad, Russia declares shifts in Iraqi position

(Continued from page 1)

U.S. and Saudi officials. Ms. Albright said. She later left for Cairo for talks with Mr. Mubarak, who has opposed military action against Baghdad.

If diplomacy fails to halt the Iraq-U.N. standoff by next week, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen will tour Gulf Arab states to discuss contingency plans for a military strike against Iraq, diplomats in Doha said on Tuesday.

"The programme is tentative on the fate of the resolution of the crisis through diplomatic means," said a U.S. diplomat.

"We all would prefer the crisis to be resolved through diplomatic channels, as the president and the secretary of state have said. But if the tour is fixed, we'll let you know the next day," he said.

The tentative programme indicates Mr. Cohen would visit all six Gulf Arab states from Sunday to Tuesday to coordinate a programme of what the diplomat called a "substantial bombing raid"

against Baghdad. Britain said Monday it is preparing a draft U.N. Security Council resolution insisting that Baghdad grant U.N. weapons inspectors "full and unrestricted access" to suspected weapons sites.

The British Foreign Office refused to say whether the resolution would declare Iraq to be in "material breach" of a U.N. resolution demanding it dismantle its major weapons programmes — setting the legal foundation for military action.

"You wouldn't expect me to discuss the details with you," said a Foreign Office spokesman, speaking anonymously. "The wording is still being discussed with our allies."

Announcing the plan to parliament earlier, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said it was vital to show that it was not just Britain and the United States — Iraq's strongest critics on the council — who are concerned at President Hussein's refusal to comply with

U.N. demands that inspectors be allowed in. Declaring that Iraq was in "material breach" of the U.N. Security Council resolution 687 of 1991, which ended the Gulf war and demanded that Iraq dismantle its major weapons programmes, would put the U.S. on solid legal ground to use force.

Without that, the British resolution would have little bite.

Arab League chief Esmat Abdul Meguid, on the eve of a trip to Baghdad, urged the United States and Britain to delay by a few months any military strike on Iraq.

His call coincided with Ms. Albright's visit to Cairo. "We're talking of a problem which has existed for seven years and if necessary we will wait a few more months to solve it peacefully," the secretary general of the 22-member pan-Arab organisation told a news conference here.

"This delay must be granted," Mr. Abdul Meguid said. "Any use of force will not solve the problem. On the

contrary, it will complicate it and that is why we hope that the United States and Britain will not threaten Iraq with the use of force," he said.

He also told the United Arab Emirates-based Al Bayan newspaper that "the statements by America and Britain seem to show that there is unprecedented harassment of Iraq, and that striking Iraq is the goal in itself, not the implementation of [U.N.] Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Abdul Meguid leaves Wednesday for Baghdad after a stop in Amman.

He was asked to undertake the trip by Mr. Mubarak, in his position as president of the last Arab summit which was held in Cairo in June 1996.

Meanwhile, Russia's lower house of parliament might refuse to ratify the START II treaty if the United States carries out its threat of a strike against Iraq, Interfax news agency said Tuesday.

The agency quoted Alexander Shokhin, leader of the pro-government Our

Home is Russia party's parliamentary group, as saying: "The consequences of strikes will influence the ratification by the Duma or this or that document, including START II."

The Duma has so far put off ratification of the arms reduction treaty which the United States and Russia signed in January 1993 and which the U.S. Senate has ratified.

The Russian foreign ministry said Tuesday that Paris and Moscow have agreed to handle the Iraq crisis in "close cooperation."

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine and his Russian counterpart, Yevgeni Primakov, reached the agreement in a telephone conversation earlier in the day, a statement from the ministry said.

They also "agreed on a coordination of efforts between the French envoy Bertrand Dufourcq and the Russian envoy in Iraq, Viktor Posuvalyuk," the statement said.

It added that Mr. Vedrine and Mr. Primakov would

hold another telephone consultation Wednesday.

Mr. Dufourcq is carrying "concrete proposals" on access by U.N. weapons inspectors to Iraq's so-called presidential sites, the French foreign ministry said Tuesday.

A ministry spokeswoman said Mr. Dufourcq, who is secretary-general of the foreign ministry, would meet President Hussein on Wednesday. Mr. Dufourcq is the first senior French government envoy sent to Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war.

"Iraq must renege on its moratorium," she said, referring to Baghdad's decision to freeze until April visits by United Nations weapons inspectors to suspected sites.

"The means of access to presidential sites must be founded on UNSCOM's [U.N. Special Commission on disarming Iraq] right to free access and must take into account the respect of Iraqi sovereignty and the dignity of the Iraqi people," she said.

France had previously

suggested that UNSCOM inspectors be accompanied by diplomats from U.N. Security Council states during visits to Iraqi presidential sites, she added.

China on Tuesday reiterated its opposition to using military force to resolve the standoff, but urged Baghdad to comply with U.N. demands.

"We oppose the use of military force or the threat of military force, and support the resolution of the crisis through peaceful means," the Xinhua news agency quoted Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao as saying.

China is one of five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council with veto power, and has consistently opposed military action to force Baghdad to grant unlimited access to inspectors looking for contraband weapons.

Beijing "hoped the relevant sides will show an attitude of restraint and flexibility and avoid further deterioration of the crisis situation," Mr. Zhu said.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Tuesday criticised the powerful U.S. military presence in the Gulf and called on countries in the region to ensure their own defence.

"The presence of dozens of warships in the Persian Gulf gives offence to the people of the region," President Khatami said in a reference to the U.S. military build-up in the region over the Iraqi arms crisis.

"The people of the region should themselves assure the security of the Persian Gulf," he said, the official news agency IRNA reported.

"American political leaders are still living in the cold war era and their mistaken policies risk bringing about their isolation," he added.

Jordanian-Iraqi joint economic committee to meet on Feb.15

By Mahmoud Masharqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN —The Jordanian-Iraqi joint economic committee is due to hold a meeting in Amman on Feb. 15 under the co-chairmanship of Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Mahdi Saleh.

In a statement to the Jordan Times Tuesday, Dr.

Mulki said that he will extend an invitation to his Iraqi counterpart to come to the talks which, he said, will focus on renewing the Iraqi-Jordanian trade protocol. The 1997 protocol, which provides for Jordan to sell Iraq \$255 million worth of goods, has not been fully covered as Jordan has not received the full payment.

Dr. Mulki said he has requested the Iraqi charge d'affaires in Amman to speed up the payment of the remaining sums which are estimated at \$30 million.

Referring to the prospect of increasing the protocol to \$300 million worth of Jordanian goods to Iraq annually, Dr. Mulki said this question will be at the heart of the coming talks.

Dr. Mulki added that he

plans to visit Iraq shortly expressing hope that Jordanian firms will boost their exports to and maintain strong ties with the Iraqi markets.

Dr. Mulki assured the Jordanian public about the strategic reserves of foodstuffs at the disposal of the Ministry of Supply should a military confrontation occur between Iraq and the U.S.

He said "there is no cause for fear because the ministry's warehouses are full of supplies and the Port of Aqaba is always ready to

import foodstuffs."

The minister noted that Jordan's present wheat supplies are sufficient for six months, while sugar is enough for one year and barley and corn are sufficient for seven months.

The private sector merchants also have large quantities of basic foodstuffs in their warehouses that can last for a very long time, according to the minister.

The minister said that the private sector has concluded deals for importing 50,000 tonnes of wheat and

120,000 tonnes of barley which are due in the middle of next month.

Referring to Jordanian exports to Iraq under the U.N.-Iraqi oil-for-food accord, the minister indicated that Jordanian firms have won 69 contracts out of 109 to export goods to Iraq under the second memorandum of understanding with the U.N. together worth \$89.88 million.

He said that with this addition, the total value of Jordanian exports under the two memoranda amount to \$199.18 million.

Markets best placed to judge financial risks — Summers

DAVOS.

Switzerland (AFP) — Free markets are crucial to any effort to control the risks of financial turmoil such as the Asian crisis in the future. U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said here Sunday.

"We in the United States and the international community have to think through what the right mechanisms are for controlling these risks in the future," Mr. Summers told the World Economic Forum annual meeting here.

"The answer to that question cannot be an ever cascading provision of finance," he said.

"I don't know what all those answers are (but) they have to rely critically on the workings of free markets because it is only markets that can aggregate information in the most effective way," he said.

In assessing risk, he added: "The judgement of the many is much more likely to be satisfactory than the judgement of the few."

At the same time there has to be a proper framework of rules and informa-

tion "that allows the proper assessment of risk and the rational response to those risks," Mr. Summers said.

"If the problems that we face from Rwanda to Bosnia to Indonesia to AIDS to global warming are going to be sensibly addressed into the new millennium (will require) generous, outward looking America," Mr. Summers said.

He said the Asian financial crisis was the result of "a major change in sentiment (by investors) with potentially very large consequences for the economies of major nations and ultimately for the global economy."

The two main tasks now were to "put out the fire" and put mechanisms into place to ensure that it did not happen again, he said.

The immediate task is to ensure that the Asian economies "pursue the kinds of policies that can restore confidence," such as sound financial policies and financial systems "whose integrity are not subject to question."

After that comes the process, of finding mecha-

nisms for controlling such risks in the future, he said.

The United States wants to "respond strongly" on both fronts, Mr. Summers added.

But "what we are able to do abroad will depend on how strong we are here at home" and while the United States despite its material prosperity faces several social problems.

"It is not right" that a child born in New York has more chance of dying before reaching the age of five than a child in Shanghai, or that 2 per cent of the adult male population is in prison, he said.

"If our society is truly to function as an example" for the rest of the world, such issues must be addressed, he said.

Public trust in U.S. public institutions and government "has been eroding for many years," he said, but it must be restored "if we are to maintain the United States as an example and if we are to maintain the strength and the confidence to do what we need to do in the world of the 21st century."

Algeria sets aside land for farmers

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria continued Wednesday to liberalise its state-dominated economy, saying it would transfer 600,000 hectares of land to farmers in mountainous and plateau areas.

In a statement, the government said ministers decided to spend 72 billion dinars (\$1.14 billion) to finance the transfer to private hands of 48,000 parcels of land over three years.

It is the first time that Algeria — which has long had

one of the Arab World's most centrally-planned economies — has moved to give rural land to farmers. The effort should result in 498,000 jobs, notably among young people, the government said.

Despite six years of massacres, bomb attacks and murders blamed on Islamic militants, which have claimed well over 60,000 lives, the government has been pressing ahead with wholesale economic

reforms.

Supervised and funded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the slowly-advancing reforms — initiated in 1989 — also include privatisation of state-owned industries and services.

Western diplomats see the reforms as a way out of Algeria's nagging economic woes, which include 30 per cent unemployment, a chronic lack of housing and a costly need to import grain.

JOB OPPORTUNITY



JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Amman Chamber of Industry is in the process of expanding its services to further support international cooperation and adapt to current local and global trends by establishing an industrial department and a small and medium sized enterprise department. To achieve this expansion, a number of qualified personnel are needed with the following requirements and qualifications:

Senior Industrial Engineer (Post 1)

Minimum of 5 years experience in international industrial affairs. Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Senior Economic Expert (Post 2)

Minimum of 5 years experience in industrial management and administration. Expertise in business administration and market. Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Environmental Engineer (Post 3)

Minimum of 3 years experience in environmental affairs. Knowledge of industrial and technological aspects of the environment. Master degree in a relevant field would be an asset.

Junior Assistant in International Trade (Post 4)

BA degree in Economics, Business Administration or Law. Knowledge of issues related to international law and trade agreements and regulations.

Computer Programmer and System Operator (Post 5)

BA in Computer Science. Knowledge of UNIX and Oracle is an asset.

All candidates must have:

- * An excellent command of Arabic and English.
- * Very good communication skills.
- * Advanced computer skills.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a recent photo, in an envelope clearly marked with the specific post to which they wish to apply to the following address:

Recruitment Committee
The Amman Chamber of Industry
P.O. Box 1800
Amman 11118
Jordan

Deadline for receipt of applications is February 28, 1998.

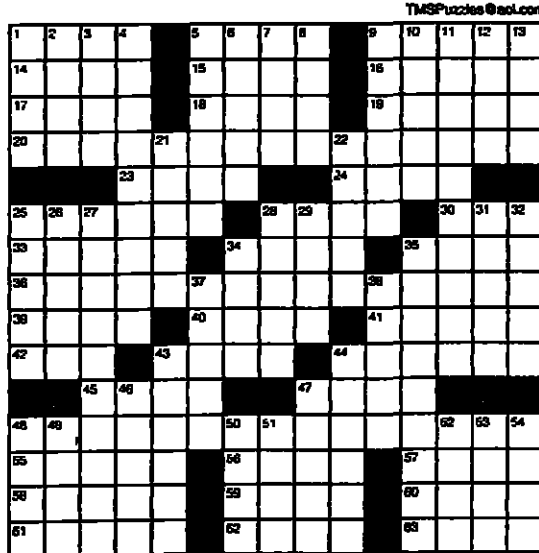
THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Long gone bird
- Cast a over
- Profundity
- Dutch cheese
- Lotion substance
- Hawaiian ciao
- Neighbor of Wisc.
- Drop feathers
- Windshield cleaner
- Three tracks
- Electromotive force unit
- Muslim weight
- Goddess of fruit
- "Sleepless in Seattle" star
- Nabokov heroine
- Director Kurosawa
- Tight closure
- Press
- Three tracks
- Skirt edges
- Lather
- Subsequently
- Japanese volcano
- Split hairs?
- Like some soil
- Great review
- 7-Knight's backup
- Three tracks
- Window on a corbel
- Seaweed
- Champagne bucket
- Virtue
- Rank
- Draft classification
- Guessed figs.
- Twig home

DOWN

- Moore of "Ghost"
- Norse Zeus
- Blocker and Duryea
- Eat-anything types

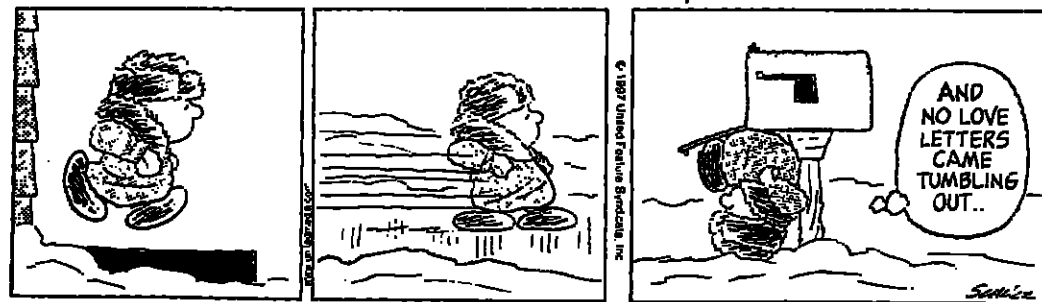


By Richard Thomas
Spring Grove, PA

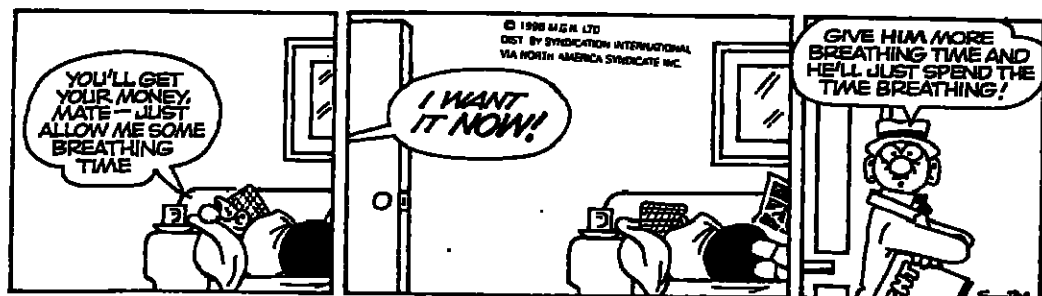
5 Anderson
6 Overhead
7 Singer Falana
8 Allows to
9 "Family Feud" host
10 "Middemarch"
11 Good repute
12 Next
13 Challenging
21 God of thunder
22 Refrain syllables
25 Turkish official
26 Dust Bowl-era
27 Around 10 AM
28 Oboist's buy
29 Ship's movements
31 Largest recipient
32 Seeing red
34 Skim along smoothly
35 Currently the style
37 Ed who was Lou Grant

38 Bus-driver Kramden
43 Writer Waugh
44 Cuban export
46 Ms. Rogers St. John
47 Washington sound
48 Hair splitter
49 "Dies" Tandy
50 Mehmet or Muhammad
52 Complexed damage
53 Wine sediment
54 Campus Greek house, briefly

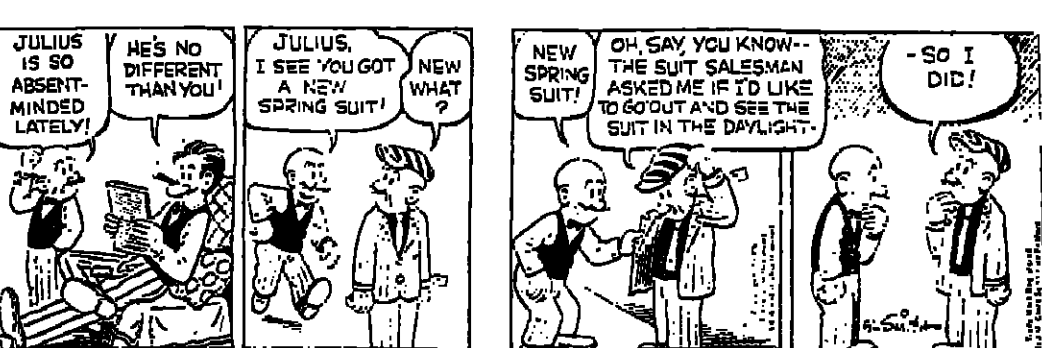
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have a very quick mind, but sometimes you get impatient. For the next several weeks, you'll have a little extra perseverance and a longer attention span. That will be helpful this afternoon, when you're trying to figure out a complicated puzzle involving money.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You might think some people like to do new things just because they're new. You might be right about that, too. You've got the best chance of getting your point across later on this evening. Don't even bother to argue before then.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You might get a nice travel opportunity. If you've saved up (unlikely), you could take a trip to some distant land. Otherwise, perhaps a person from a distant land will invite you to visit. Why don't you look around for somebody who's liable to do that, and make the suggestion?

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're not really interested in taking care of people today, but if you can bring yourself to do it, you'll be glad you did. Actually, it will be a little bit easier than it has been before, once you get into the project. And besides, it looks like your boss or another older person may be insisting upon it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Mercury goes into Aquarius this morning, which is in your solar Seventh House of partners. They'll be better with words than usual. In fact, you'll find it difficult to get a word in edgewise. Don't get into an argument with one of those people. You don't stand a chance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your motivation in life is to take care of others. One way you do this is by helping them stay organized. Today, you have the opportunity to do it for a co-worker. The only problem is that you're going to have to figure out how to do the job first. Don't worry. You'll have tomorrow to work on this project, too.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good time for you and your sweetheart to make plans for the future. You can set high goals this year, because you're willing to take risks to make them happen. Be careful not to spend too much, or you could be in for a huge case of buyer's remorse this afternoon.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It may be hard to keep your mind on your job today, especially in the morning. If you can take today off to finish up a few things at home, do it. You'll probably have to go in this afternoon. By then you should have things well settled. This afternoon looks good for meetings with decision-makers.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) For the next few weeks, you'll have more patience with technical matters. So, if there's something you've been trying to fix, take another look at that manual. You rarely have the patience to do that, but today is an exception. Find a really good how-to book and curl up with it tonight.

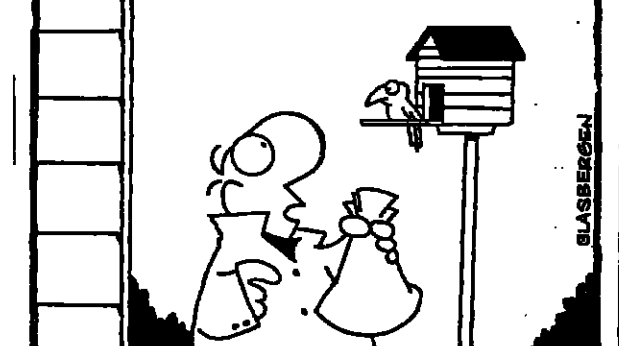
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Money becomes a major issue in your life. You may actually have more than you need, maybe even enough to start planning the vacation of your dreams. At the very least, it's a marvelous day to make the commitment. If you wait until tonight, somebody who'd like to go with you would love to help with that decision.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Today, you'll be quick, curious and eager to learn. You'll be fascinated by everything you lay eyes on. This should be an interesting few weeks, but this evening it could be a problem. You'll be dancing circles around someone who's trying to tell you what to do. Be patient.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Today marks the beginning of a complicated phase. You'll be doing paperwork in connection with big companies or educational institutions. You're a little stressed about money right now. That's OK. Everything will work out fine. Just take your time and do it right, so you don't have to do it over.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I'll bring you food every day and you tell all the other birds to stay away from my windshield. Deal?"

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PUPER
BLACE
NIDIOE
GLENET



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: FOYER YOUNG FINITE INVERT
Answer: An unexpected pit stop can become this — A TURN OFF

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

MAFICO chief cautions Jordanians against high expectation from EU partnership

"WE ARE deceiving ourselves when we overestimate the advantages of the Jordanian-European partnership. Our expectations that Europe will help Jordanian companies will also fail," Rashad Othman, the general manager of MAFICO (Al Mafrag Food Industries Company) said in an interview. He added that Europeans are the most demanding that foreign markets be opened while, at the same time, placing obstacles in the way of imports.

Noting that Jordanian companies are not all qualified to enter into real partnership with the Europeans, Mr. Othman said the partnership should depend on cost saving which is lacking in Jordan. Furthermore, he indicated, Jordanian industries should be considered as a base for exports by stressing the relative benefits in this regard.

For example, Mr. Othman explained, Jordanian industries are better poised than any European company to export to Saudi Arabia if we had the capability to manufacture a product and export it in accordance with previously-set standards. He stressed that we should revise our Jordanian manufacturing capabilities and specify the positive relative advantage and by concentrating on these two elements we will qualify to compete by lower cost and prices.

Mr. Othman praised the way followed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade towards developing skills and qualifications and giving the necessary means to improve quality but also urged the ministry to expedite reductions of customs on production inputs.

The MAFICO general manager spoke of many hindrances facing the food processing industry in Jordan especially the numerous parties responsible for issuing health certificates. Noting that such a procedure was involving the Institute of Standards and Specifications and the ministries of health and agriculture, Mr. Othman emphasized that only one entity should be specified to examine food products whether imported or being readied for export.

Mr. Othman stressed the importance of facilitating the procedures of export-oriented industries whether in the clearing stage or in speeding the entry of manufacturing needs such as carton packages or metal cans. He said demands in this regard have been presented to successive governments but the subject until now is still under study.

"Competition does not wait as it seizes the opportunities wherever they are," he concluded (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Australian bank says now is the time to invest in Asia

MELBOURNE, Australia (AFP) — The ANZ Banking Group Ltd. has said it would pounce on cut-price acquisitions in Asia in the midst of the region's economic turmoil, which it maintained had a minimal impact on its earnings.

Asian markets had until recently been "both restrictive and expensive to enter," chief executive John McFarlane told the bank's annual general meeting.

"We now have a unique opportunity to take advantage of the opening of these markets to expand our presence in the region, principally through acquisition and joint venture," he said.

ANZ already had "informal approaches as the preferred partner, but such opportunities are still in the formative stage."

Mr. McFarlane's comments followed those from a number of executives in financial services companies in recent days who said they were looking to take advantage of cheaper assets in Asia following the turmoil there.

ANZ Chairman Charles Goode told the meeting that the crisis was expected to have only a relatively small effect on the

Bank equity stakes aid Israeli firms' profits — study

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli banks contribute to the profitability and reduce the risk of industrial companies in which they hold a five per cent or greater stake, a study released by the Bank of Israel said.

The central bank attributed this to the ability of banks and the financial concerns they control, such as mutual and provident fund management companies, to provide management support and loans.

By contrast, fund managers not connected to a bank have no influence over the profitability and risk of their portfolio companies.

The report said this was because non-bank fund managers tended to focus on the average portfolio yield rather than on individual holdings.

Non-financial and private shareholders also contribute to their portfolio companies' profitability and risk, but to a lesser extent than the banks, the report concluded.

The Bank of Israel has in the past pressured the banks to reduce their non-bank holdings to reduce their influence over the economy.

Banking laws currently prohibit banks from holding more than 20 per cent of a non-bank company's equity.

Housing Bank imposes monthly commission on small savers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) will examine the legality of a new measure adopted by the Housing Bank which has imposed a monthly commission of one dinar on all accounts totalling less than JD100.

The new measure also applies to children's saving accounts at the Housing Bank which pays an interest of five per cent on savings in excess of JD1,000 and four per cent on savings less than JD1,000.

Despite the denial by the Housing Bank's Public Relations Director Mohammad Abu Zeid that the bank

has imposed such a commission, Housing Bank branches approached by Al Ra'i Arabic daily and the Jordan Times said they have received a circular requesting them to enforce the new measure.

The branches said they had already collected this commission from accounts with balances of less than JD100. While the Housing Bank argues that processing and servicing saving accounts of less than JD100 cost more than five dinars a month, other banking sources say banks usually cover any such differences from other transactions.

Kuwait Airways to be partially privatised

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwaiti government is planning to sell off 60 per cent of its national flag carrier, Kuwait Airways Corp. (KAC), the airline's managing director has said.

Ahmad Al Mishari added that the government's remaining 40 per cent stake would also be sold off "progressively" over time.

He told the official news agency KUNA that initial plans to offer 50 per cent for public sale and 10 per cent to KAC staff had been drawn up by the government-run Kuwait Investment Authority.

Mr. Mishari gave no timeframe for the sale, saying that he was waiting for a government response on

the "political, social and economic" aspects of the deal which has been under consideration for several years.

He said that for "strategic social reasons" the government wanted KAC to continue employing Kuwaitis, even though expatriate labour might turn out to be much cheaper.

KAC announced losses of \$115 million in 1995-96, and has yet to announce results for the year to June 1997.

The company blamed the losses on the cost of replacing aircraft destroyed by the 1990 Iraqi invasion of the emirate.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
| US Dollar | - | 1.8178 | 0.8090 | 1.4707 | 125.38 | 1.4626 | 1793.20 | 2.0484 | 6.0910 |
| DE Mark | 0.5501 | - | 0.3349 | 0.8088 | 69.29 | 0.7990 | 986.47 | 1.1271 | 3.3516 |
| GB Sterling | 1.6420 | 2.9863 | - | 2.4134 | 206.85 | 2.3862 | 2944.43 | 3.3631 | 10.0014 |
| CH Franc | 0.6799 | 1.2317 | 0.4138 | - | 85.72 | 0.9876 | 1219.70 | 138.31 | 4.1418 |
| JP Yen | 0.0079 | 1.4412 | 0.4827 | 1.1657 | - | 1.1619 | 14.23 | 162.43 | 4.8309 |
| CA Dollar | 0.6884 | 1.2479 | 0.4186 | 1.0112 | 1.15 | - | 1231.91 | 1.4089 | 4.1821 |
| IT Lira | 0.0006 | 1.0127 | 0.3392 | 0.0819 | 1425.52 | 0.8095 | - | 11.41 | 3.3948 |
| NL Guilder | 0.4882 | 88.88 | 0.2971 | 71.77 | 61.48 | 0.7080 | 878.88 | - | 2.9734 |
| FR Franc | 0.1642 | 0.2982 | 0.0999 | 24.1203 | 20.67 | 0.2384 | 33.62 | 33.8200 | - |

| Middle Eastern Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | JOD | SAR | BAH | QAT | KUW | AED | LBP | EGP |
| US Dollar | - | 0.7090 | 3.7505 | 0.3770 | 3.6410 | 0.3062 | 3.6728 | 1629.00 | 3.4125 |
| Jordan Dinar | 1.4104 | - | 6.2898 | 0.5317 | 5.4364 | 0.4305 | 6.1903 | 2185.56 | 4.8121 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.2686 | 0.1890 | - | 0.1005 | 0.97 | 0.0814 | 0.98 | 407.68 | 0.9059 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 2.65 | 1.8807 | 9.3485 | - | 9.56 | 0.8096 | 9.74 | 4055.31 | 9.0520 |
| Qatar Dinar | 0.2748 | 0.1947 | 1.0301 | 1.0301 | - | 0.0838 | 1.01 | 419.94 | 0.9372 |
| Kuwait Dinar | 3.2763 | 2.3229 | 12.2879 | 1.2351 | 11.93 | - | 12.03 | 5009.50 | 0.9372 |
| Emirates Dinar | 0.2723 | 0.1930 | 1.0212 | 0.1028 | 0.9913 | 0.0831 | - | 416.30 | 0.9921 |
| Lebanese L1000 | 0.65 | 0.4637 | 2.4528 | 0.2466 | 2.3873 | 0.1996 | 2.4021 | - | 2.2319 |
| Egyptian | 0.2830 | 0.2076 | 1.0990 | 0.1105 | 1.0610 | 0.0894 | 1.0763 | 448.06 | - |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Oil | Last | Previous | | | | | | | |
| Brent | 15.18 | 15.43 | | | | | | | |
| W. Texas | 16.79 | 17.04 | | | | | | | |
| Bonny | 15.18 | 15.43 | | | | | | | |
| Dubai | 13.40 | 13.77 | | | | | | | |
| UL Gas | 160.00 | 160.00 | | | | | | | |

| Metal Prices | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Metal | Bid | Offer | | | | | | | |
| Gold (oz's) | 297.6 | 298.1 | | | | | | | |
| Silver (oz's) | 6.55 | 6.57 | | | | | | | |
| Platinum (oz's) | 387 | 389 | | | | | | | |
| AL (3 Months) | 1523 | 1524 | | | | | | | |
| CU (3 Months) | 1700 | 1705 | | | | | | | |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1085 | 1090 | | | | | | | |
| Lead (3 Months) | 526 | 528 | | | | | | | |
| NI (3 Months) | 5420 | 5430 | | | | | | | |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Commodity | Last | Delivery | | | | | | | |
| Coffee (c/lbs) | 182.42 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Cocoa (\$/ton) | 1806 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Sugar (\$/ton) | 283.3 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Wheat (\$/ton) | 0 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Soya (c/lbs) | 25.04 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Tee (\$/bbl) | 225 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Barley (\$/bbl) | 0 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Rice (\$/ton) | 400 | Spot | | | | | | | |

| JOD Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | Buy | Sell | | | | | | | |
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 | | | | | | | |
| GB Sterling | 1.1645 | 1.1703 | | | | | | | |
| DE Mark | 0.3896 | 0.3915 | | | | | | | |
| CH Franc | 0.4806 | 0.483 | | | | | | | |
| FR Franc | 0.1162 | 0.1168 | | | | | | | |
| JP Yen | 0.8609 | 0.8636 | | | | | | | |
| NL Guilder | 0.3457 | 0.3474 | | | | | | | |
| IT Lira | 0.3945 | 0.3985 | | | | | | | |

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

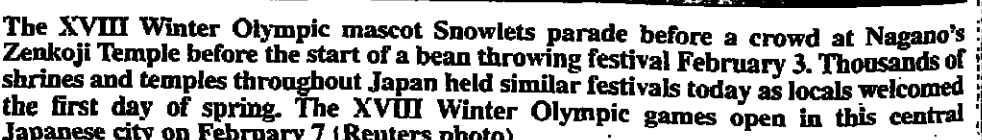
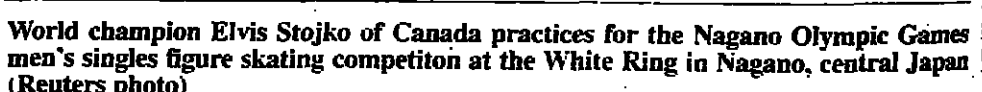
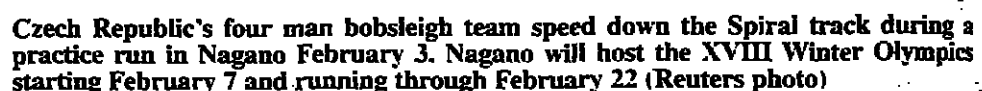
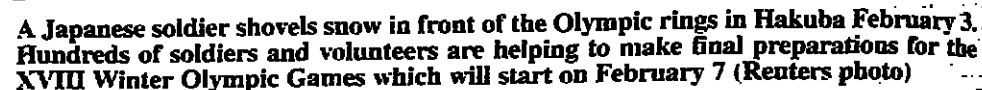
| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIDDIYAT | | | | | | | | | | |
| TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/02/1998 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH | PAST 12 MONTHS LOW | COMPANY'S NAME | P / E | DIV. | NO. OF TRANS. | NO. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED JD | OPEN PRICE | CLOSE PRICE | CHANGE |
| 346,000 | 250,000 | ARAB BANK | 15.1 | 1.22 | 13 | 1480 | 484350 | 329.00 | 328.00 | 1.00 |
| N 2,340 | 1,680 | JOR. NATIONAL BK. | E | 0.00 | 13 | 5000 | 8650 | 1.72 | 1.73 | .01 |
| S 2,540 | 1,400 | BANK OF JORDAN | 4.4 | 0.00 | 4 | 1350 | 1890 | 1.40 | 1.40 | - |
| S 2,680 | 1,550 | INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK. | 10.1 | 6.18 | 4 | 2500 | 4225 | 1.69 | 1.69 | - |
| S 970 | 620 | JOR. CUP. BANK | 4.2 | 10.14 | 13 | 15700 | 10390 | 1.69 | 1.69 | .01 |
| S 4,050 | 2,250 | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 11.9 | 4.10 | 8 | 3620 | 8485 | 2.35 | 2.34 | .01 |
| 1,620 | 870 | BST. AL-HAL (BETNA) | -6 | 16.67 | 1 | 100 | 90 | .90 | .90 | - |
| BANK SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| INDEX: 231.67 | | | %CHG: -0.21 | | 57 | 29785 | 518147 | | | |
| 2,950 | 2,700 | JORDAN INSURANCE | 11.6 | 5.56 | 1 | 1200 | 3240 | 2.70 | 2.70 | - |
| 2,120 | 1,590 | JOR. FRENCH INSUR. | 5.6 | 7.50 | 1 | 500 | 1000 | 2.04 | 2.00 | .04 |
| INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| INDEX: 120.14 | | | %CHG: -0.20 | | 2 | 1700 | 4240 | | | |
| 2,050 | 1,550 | JOR. ELECTRIC PWR. | 9.8 | 4.95 | 84 | 57998 | 116645 | 2.01 | 2.02 | .01 |
| 1,550 | 930 | NATL. PORTFOLIO | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 2650 | 2668 | 1.00 | 1.02 | .02 |
| 8,900 | 6,700 | ALRA'Y | 15.0 | 5.95 | 1 | 2000 | 16800 | 8.20 | 8.40 | .20 |
| 1,590 | 1,150 | MID. EAST TOURISM | 18.3 | 0.00 | 1 | 300 | 600 | 1.20 | 1.20 | - |
| 6,000 | 2,690 | ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC. | 10.1 | 0.00 | 5 | 3700 | 14199 | 3.85 | 3.85 | - |
| 1,050 | 740 | JORDAN EXPT. INV. | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 3500 | 2975 | .90 | .85 | .05 |
| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| INDEX: 116.84 | | | %CHG: +0.34 | | 98 | 70248 | 153887 | | | |
| 4,450 | 2,750 | JOR. CEMENT FACT. | 20.1 | 3.69 | 3 | 287 | 854 | 2.99 | 2.98 | .01 |
| 11,190 | 9,200 | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 10.0 | 8.64 | 16 | 1145 | 11787 | 10.31 | 10.29 | .02 |
| 1,800 | 1,320 | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 381 | 509 | 1.36 | 1.34 | .02 |
| 7,350 | 5,800 | JOR. WORSTED MILLS | 10.7 | 3.02 | 1 | 700 | 663 | 6.98 | 6.63 | .35 |
| 4,700 | 3,440 | ARAB PHARM. MANF. | 12.0 | 4.58 | 23 | 14596 | 63650 | 4.35 | 4.37 | .02 |
| 2,940 | 2,200 | JORDAN PAPER | 9.4 | 8.73 | 1 | 100 | 280 | 2.80 | 2.80 | - |
| S 1,420 | 800 | RAPIA INDUSTRIES | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 80 | .80 | .80 | - |
| 6,000 | 4,400 | JAR. ALDAMA DV. INV. | 14.0 | 4.39 | 3 | 10000 | 57000 | 5.70 | 5.70 | - |
| 620 | 440 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 9.1 | 0.00 | 6 | 665 | 6380 | 1.45 | 1.45 | - |
| 1,200 | 720 | ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD. | 22.3 | 0.00 | 1 | 2300 | 1679 | .73 | .73 | - |
| 1,120 | 370 | INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 200 | 82 | .41 | .41 | - |
| 2,600 | 1,380 | UNIV. CHEM. INDS. | 13.1 | 6.90 | 3 | 4400 | 6380 | 1.45 | 1.45 | - |
| 600 | 530 | JOR. SULPHUR CHEM. | 9 | 0.00 | 8 | 3150 | 1815 | .58 | .57 | .01 |
| 1,610 | 1,150 | ARAB PHARM. CHEM. | 15.1 | 5.93 | 1 | 750 | 295 | 1.19 | 1.18 | .01 |
| S 1,800 | 820 | UNIV. MOOD. INDS. | 9 | .26 | 18 | 9900 | 7544 | .82 | .82 | - |
| 1,410 | 690 | JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES | 9.8 | 13.70 | 8 | 3650 | 2621 | .72 | .73 | .01 |
| 960 | 810 | JOR. NEW CABLE CO. | 16.5 | 0.00 | 8 | 2900 | 2600 | .90 | .90 | - |
| 810 | 700 | JORDAN STEEL | 31.2 | 7.25 | 4 | 2050 | 1415 | .70 | .69 | .01 |
| 840 | 570 | MID. EAST COMPLEX | 7.9 | 15.63 | 20 | 16550 | 10575 | .61 | .64 | .03 |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| INDEX: 109.70 | | | %CHG: -0.14 | | 129 | 222359 | 265882 | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | INDEX: 165.82 | | %CHG: -0.16 | | 286 | 323992 | 942156 | |
| PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/02/1998 | | | | | | | | | | |
| N 1,050 | 990 | EXPORT & FIN. BK. 75% | E | 0.00 | 6 | 10900 | 8175 | .99 | 1.00 | .01 |
| 610 | 340 | JOR. TRADE FAIR | 9 | 0.00 | 9 | 2160 | 8712 | .37 | .37 | - |
| 860 | 800 | UNION INV. CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 8 | 18500 | 3700 | .70 | .70 | - |
| 570 | 360 | ARAB FIN. INVEST. | 9 | 0.00 | 27 | 66150 | 36217 | .93 | .85 | .03 |
| N 1,000 | 720 | AL-SHARQ INV. CO. | E | 0.00 | 1 | 5100 | 4694 | .94 | .94 | - |
| 1,340 | 140 | JOR. HOSE MFG. CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 5000 | 800 | .16 | .16 | - |
| 500 | 270 | ARAB INTL. INV. TRD. | 32.2 | 0.00 | 2 | 750 | 210 | .29 | .28 | .01 |
| 750 | 380 | NATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO | 14.1 | 0.00 | 50 | 166700 | 67138 | .42 | .40 | .02 |
| 800 | 800 | READY MIX CONC. | 6 | 0.00 | 6 | 6400 | 7391 | 1.11 | 1.17 | .06 |
| 670 | 580 | MID-EAST PHARM. 90% | E | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 540 | .64 | .64 | - |
| 730 | 550 | RACI PHARM. | E | 0.00 | 60 | 3580 | 358 | .71 | .71 | - |
| 470 | 240 | INDUS. ENG. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 750 | 70 | .77 | .78 | .01 |
| N 950 | 570 | ADVANCED PHARMA. IND. | E | 0.00 | 22 | 14066 | 7917 | .57 | .57 | - |
| N 1,000 | 660 | NAT. ALUMINIUM. 75% | 93.2 | 0.00 | 4 | 400 | 168 | .67 | .67 | - |
| N 1,310 | 1,000 | MUTULADAM | E | 0.00 | 3 | 390 | 428 | 1.10 | 1.10 | - |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | 140 | 319706 | 146515 | | | |
| * : New 12 months low | | | | | | | | | | |
| S : Stock dividend during the past 12 months | | | | | | | | | | |
| N : Listed during the past 12 months | | | | | | | | | | |
| P : P/E ratio is 100 or more | | | | | | | | | | |

Nagano villagers fear 'Olympic recession'

Rogge's strongest rival for the third Board vacancy, when

Olympic observers have put his chances of defeating de Merode, the Olympic front-man in the battle against drugs, as next to zero.

3:30, 6:30,
10, 10:30



However, the Jamaican pilot, Dudley

Hopefully, there will be more Eddie the Eagles trying to fly at Nagano.

Shows: 12:30, 3
8:30, 1

The tie takes place on grass at Mildura, in Victoria state, from April 3 to 5.

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1036.

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SCOREBOARD

| | | | |
|---|-----|--------------|-------|
| NBA | | | |
| Washington | 113 | Detroit | 101 |
| Cleveland | 109 | Minnesota | 99 |
| Miami | 90 | Atlanta | 83 |
| Phoenix | 106 | Philadelphia | 97 |
| Dallas | 104 | Vancouver | 90 |
| Chicago | 111 | Denver | 72 |
| NHL | | | |
| NY Islanders | 4 | Pittsburgh | 2 |
| New Jersey | 1 | Ottawa | 0 |
| Buffalo | 7 | Tampa Bay | 3 |
| Dallas | 5 | Toronto | 1 |
| Edmonton | 1 | Los Angeles | 0 |
| Colorado | 2 | Vancouver | 0 |
| Ny Rangers | 3 | San Jose | 2 |
| Spanish first division | | | |
| Real Madrid | 1 | Valencia | 2 |
| Scottish Cup | | | |
| Third Round Replay | | | |
| Albion | 0 | Livingston | 0 aet |
| (Albion win 6-5 on penalties) | | | |
| League Premier Division | | | |
| Celtic | 3 | Aberdeen | 1 |
| Greek Championship | | | |
| AEK Athens | 1 | Olympiakos | 0 |
| Marseille ATP Tour | | | |
| Marc-Kevin Goellner (Ger) bt Andrea Gaudenzi (Ita) 7/6, 6/2 | | | |
| Albert Portas (Spa x7) bt Alex Lopez-Moron (Spa) 6/3, 6/3 | | | |
| Magnus Gustafsson (Swe) bt Johan Van Herck (Bel) 6-7 (7/1), 6-4 | | | |
| Sebastien Grosjean (Fra) bt Jeff Tarango (USA) 6-3, 6-4 | | | |

Henman's slump continues

SPLIT (AFP) — Tim Henman's disastrous run since reaching the Sydney final last month continued here on Monday when he crashed out in the first-round of the \$375,000 ATP tournament to fast-improving 21-year-old German player Rainer Schuttler.

The third-seeded British player, who is ranked 18 in the world and who lost in the first-round of the Australian Open, went down 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 to his 115th-ranked opponent from Bad Hamburg. Henman had been hoping for a good run in Zagreb to erase the memory of his five-set loss to Frenchman Jerome Golmard in Melbourne when, in his own words, he played some of the "worst tennis" of his career.

But he failed to raise his game against Schuttler who was not ranked in the world top-300 twelve months ago.

In other first-round matches, second-seed and home favourite Goran Ivanisevic put his recent injuries and poor form behind him, saved a set point in the opening set, and notched up a straight-sets 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 win over another German David Prinosil.

The other seeds on duty also won their matches — fourth-seeded Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine

coming back after dropping the first set to defeat Spaniard Alex Calatrava 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (11/9), 6-3, and seventh-seed Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic putting out Jens Knippschild of Germany 6-3, 6-7 (7/1), 7-5.

British No. 1 Greg Rusedski, who is the top-seed in Zagreb, faces a first-round meeting against Italy's world No. 81 Gianluca Pozzi.

Grand Slam Cup welcomes women for first time

MUNICH (AFP) — Women will take part in the Grand Slam Cup for the first time this autumn, organisers confirmed on Tuesday.

The eight best performers in the year's Grand Slam events will take part in the event from September 29 to October 4 with \$800,000 at stake for the winner.

In turn the men's event, held since 1990, will be reduced to 12 entrants from 16 last year, with the winner receiving \$1.3 million.

"We have always had the ambition to make the Grand Slam Cup a tournament for both the men and the women," said tournament director Bill Dennis.

It was also confirmed on Tuesday that the tournament will remain in Munich until 2001.

At last year's event there had been talk of a switch to Asia after 1999.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Real Madrid throw away chance

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid failed to take their chance to recapture the leadership of the Spanish first division here Monday when they were beaten 2-1 at home by Valencia. Real, one point behind pacesetters Barcelona, never recovered after the visitors took a shock 2-0 lead after just 17 minutes — thanks to a penalty from Mendieta and a goal from Ilic. Croat frontrunner Davor Suker pulled one back for Real with a 68th minute penalty but the home side were never able to get on top. It was only a ninth win in 21 league matches for Valencia.

Celtic storm back

GLASGOW (AFP) — Celtic proved their Premier division title mettle by clinching a 3-1 victory over Aberdeen at Parkhead after going behind to an early goal. The victory puts Wm Jansen's men into a three-way tie at the top of the table on 48 points with Rangers and Hearts. Aberdeen opened the scoring after just nine minutes when David Rowan's ambitious drive benefited from a touch by Alan Stubbs which wrongfooted goalkeeper Jonathan Gould. But Celtic played their way back into the match with Morten Wieghorst launching their fightback after 22 minutes. Henrik Larsson then found time and space in the Don's area to punish hesitant defending with a firm header to move Celtic ahead after 35 minutes. Celtic stayed in charge and they sealed the match thanks to substitutes Simon Donnelly and Darren Jackson who combined superbly with the latter hooking the ball into the roof of the net from close range after Donnelly's left wing cross.

Grosjean delights home fans

MARSEILLE (AFP) — Local player Sebastien Grosjean followed up his junior title triumph at the Australian Open by winning his first-round match against American Jeff Tarango at the \$539,250 ATP event here Monday. Grosjean, ranked 145th, scored a 6-3, 6-4 win over the 58th-ranked France-based American who was involved in several protests with the umpire over line decisions in the day's other matches seventh-seed Albert Portas of Spain beat compatriot Alex Lopez-Moron 6-3, 6-3, Marc-Kevin Goellner of Germany saw off Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy 7-6 (7/3), 6-2, and Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson defeated Johan Van Herck of Belgium 6-7 (7/1), 6-4, 6-2.

Muster rules out Davis Cup play

VIENNA (AFP) — Thomas Muster has ruled out playing in Austria's Davis Cup match against Israel in Tel Aviv in April, saying he needs to play on clay and concentrate on improving his world ranking. Muster, whose ranking has sunk to 15th in the world after a series of poor results, said he would not be available for the Euro-Africa zone match from April 3-5. "Because of the terrible situation with my ATP Tour points, I am forced to concentrate on getting ready for the big clay court tournaments," Muster said. The Israel-Austria match is scheduled to be played on a hardcourt surface.

Maleeva upsets Huber in Toray Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO (AFP) — Magdalena Maleeva stormed back from match point down to beat sixth seed Anke Huber of Germany on the opening day of the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Bulgarian was one set and 5-6, 30-40 down in the 11th game when she fired a timely ace to save it before staging a remarkable comeback victory 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

Fifth-seeded Irina Spirlea of Romania powered past Park Sung-Hee of South Korea 7-5, 6-0, while Japan's ace Ai Sugiyama, eighth seed, overcame a slow start to beat Kerry-Anne Guse of Australia 7-6 (7/3), 6-0.

"Nothing," said Maleeva when she was asked how she felt when match point dawned. "I don't remember. I just tried to stay positive. I tried to think of just another point."

A frustrated Huber, ranked 13th against Maleeva's 31st, seemed to lose her nerve after missing the match point and threw her racket several times when she made an error in the crucial tie-breaker.

Huber lost a 3-0 lead in the tie-breaker. Maleeva and Huber kept their serves to 1-1 in the decider, but the spirited Bulgarian narrowly won all the following close games to secure a berth in the second round.

"I knew I don't have very much confidence, because I haven't played very well, but as the match went on, I could see what my game looks like when I play well," said Maleeva, who was once ranked fourth two years ago.

Maleeva, yet to win a title since October 1995 at Oakland, said her ranking went down because she had



Anke Huber

"a lot of back problems" and then she fractured her left wrist last year.

"But I have been working as hard as I ever had, I didn't work so hard when I was in the top 10. I hope I can go back to top 20 first and then top 10 this year. But I'll take each match and I'm really happy I won today," she said.

Meanwhile, Croatian teenage sensation Mirjana Lucic failed to clear the first hurdle as the 15-year-old Australian Open doubles champion crashed to Elena Likhovtseva of Russia 1-6, 2-6.

Japan's wild card entrants Miho Saeki defeated Magui Serna of Spain 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, and Yuka Yoshida edged past Magdalena Grzybowska of Poland 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

Rita Grande of Italy downed Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands 3-6, 6-1, 6-4, while Chinese qualifier Li Fang knocked out Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn 6-1, 6-3 in a battle of the two countries' top players.

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Sameh Madani
Managing Director

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Interested candidates should send their CV by fax to: 612902 or P.O. Box 9363, Amman 11191, Jordan. CVs received after February 8, 1998 will not be considered.

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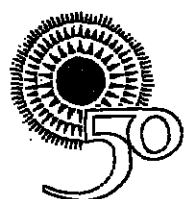
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Sri Lanka which celebrates its 50th Anniversary of independence on the 04th of February 1998 has gone through many good and bad spells. I sincerely hope that with the advent of the 50th Anniversary of Independent, Peace and Prosperity will prevail at all levels and restore Sri Lanka as a resplendent Isle.

May I also take this opportunity to wish the Organizers of these Celebrations in the Kingdom of Jordan, all success in their efforts to celebrate this occasion.

D.A. KANNANGARA
Chairman

Invitation for Pre-Qualification of Contractors For the Construction of Integrated Development Project for the Southern Ghors

The Government of Jordan had the final design and tender documents prepared for the works listed below. It has secured funds from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development towards the finance of construction and supervision of these works. The three dams listed are to be constructed of Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) with the properties as described:-

- Wala Dam, 49m high, 300m long, 9.3MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 185,000m³.
- Mujib Dam, 62m high, 680m long, 35MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 750,000m³.
- Tannur Dam, 69m high, 240m long, 16.8MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 280,000m³.
- Diversion weir at Mujib, with a 1.3 kms long tunnel, the southern conveyor 73.5 km long, northern conveyor 28 km long, and irrigation infrastructure for 11,862 dunums.

It is anticipated that the construction of the project will be divided into five separate contracts:

1. Construction of Wala Dam.
2. Construction of Tannur Dam.
3. Construction of Mujib Dam.
4. Construction of Mujib Weir and Conveyors.
5. Construction of Irrigation Infrastructure.

The Contract Documents and all correspondence related to the contract will be in the English language. Applications for pre-qualification are invited from International Contractors in association with Jordanian Contractors classified by the Government Tenders Directorate (G.T.D.) as First and Second Grade in the field of:

- a) Water and Sewerage or Roads or Concrete/Bridges & Culverts for Contracts 1,2,3 and 4.
- b) Water and Sewerage for Contract No. 5.

The International Contractor does not have to include the name of his local associate at the time of pre-qualification, however, the pre-qualification document should include a statement by the international contractor to confirm his commitment to enter into an association at the tender stage with a local contractor, having the same classification stated above, and to submit the association agreement. International Contractors willing to participate in pre-qualification for the above project are invited to collect the pre-qualification documents in accordance with the following terms:

1. The share of local contractors shall be at least 25% of the total contract value.
2. All given information must be correct and accurate.
3. The International Contractors shall comply with the law of the Jordanian Engineering Association and Jordanian Contractors Association regarding registration.
4. The documents can be purchased for the following non-refundable fee:
 - a) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Wala and Tannur Dams" (one combined document).
 - b) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Mujib Dam."
 - c) JD150 for pre-qualification document of "Mujib Weir, Tunnel, Conveyors, and Irrigation Infrastructure."
5. The deadline set for the purchase of pre-qualification document shall be on February 10th, 1998.
6. The pre-qualification proposals shall be submitted to the Jordan Valley Authority (address below) not later than 13:00 hours (local time) on March 15th, 1998.

Address

Special Committee for the Mujib and Southern Ghors Project Address:
P.O. Box 2769, Amman - Jordan
Fax: 962-6-5689916
Tel: 962-6-5689-400
Tel: 962-6-5689-464

Jordan Valley Authority
Secretary General
Dr. Dureid Mahasneh



GENDER APARTHEID: A woman doctor from Afghanistan, veiled in a traditional burqa, speaks Tuesday at the Breydel building during a news conference with European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino (right) and European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, Anita Gradin (left). The doctor, asking not to be identified for security reasons, said the repression against women by the Taliban regime is anti-Islamic. A group of 50 prominent women, dedicating the forthcoming International Women's Day to the women in Afghanistan, urged the international community to step up pressure for an end to the 'gender apartheid' installed by the Taliban regime (Reuters photo)

Israel demolishes Arab home in front of parliament deputies

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Israeli army destroyed the home of a Palestinian near the West Bank town of Ramallah Tuesday while a tour of Israeli parliament deputies looked on. A bulldozer, accompanied by Israeli troops, demolished the unfinished three-room home belonging to Ali Samhan, located near a road leading to a Jewish settlement outside the village of Ras Karkar, witnesses said.

A group of Israeli parliament deputies happened to be at the

site as they took a tour of Jewish settlements in the Ramallah area organised by the Palestinian information ministry.

A large crowd of Palestinians gathered during the demolition and a woman from the Samhan family shouted at the soldiers and the parliament deputies, but no disturbances took place.

The parliament deputies, most of them from left-wing opposition parties, made no comment about the house

demolition to journalists accompanying the tour.

The Israeli army frequently demolishes Palestinian homes which have been built without receiving permits from West Bank occupation authorities.

But Palestinians complain the authorities rarely grant the permits and accuse Israel of using house demolitions to reduce Arab populations in the 70 per cent of the West Bank still under complete Israeli control.

Palestinian dies after beating in PNA custody — rights group

HEBRON (AFP) — A human rights group accused Palestinian police Tuesday of beating to death a Palestinian who died overnight under mysterious circumstances while in police custody.

But the office of the chief of police in the West Bank town of Hebron denied Nasser Al Hurub, 20, had been beaten, saying he committed suicide in the police station by "strangling himself with his shoelaces."

The rights group, the Prisoners' Club said, Hurub was "detained by the police criminal investigations division during which he was attacked and suffered severe haemorrhaging from the nose and ears."

"We demand an investiga-

tion into his death and the punishment and trial of those officials responsible," said the Bethlehem-based group, which deals with prisoners' rights, in a statement received by AFP.

An aide to the Hebron police chief denied Hurub had been beaten, saying he committed suicide after being called into for questioning on "a criminal case" by police in the village of Dura, outside Hebron.

Hurub "was left alone in a room to write an affidavit and when police returned to the room they found he had strangled himself with his shoelaces," the aide, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

The aide would not specify the charges for which Hurub

had been called in for questioning, saying only that Hurub, a resident of the nearby village of Deir Samet, had a criminal record.

Hurub's body was taken to a hospital in Bethlehem for an autopsy, hospital sources said. Hurub becomes the 19th person to die while in the custody of Palestinian security services since the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994. Seven people died in 1997, according to human rights groups.

Human rights groups have said some of the deaths were due to torture or police brutality and have accused the PNA of not properly investigating the causes of death or punishing security agents.

Cabalist rabbi to mobilise angels against Saddam, ward off incoming rockets

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A leading rabbinical mystic plans to hold a special prayer in Tel Aviv calling on the angels to protect Israel from an eventual missile attack from Iraq, the rabbi's son said on Tuesday.

Rabbi David Batzri, a specialist in the cabala system of Jewish mysticism, will hold the ceremony in the coming days, Moshe Batzri told Israel Radio.

"My father will go to Tel Aviv to hold special prayers calling on the angels to pro-

tect Israel if it is attacked by 'Saddam Hussein,' he said, referring to the Iraqi president.

"In the meantime, people must pray once a day and perform good acts" to ward off Iraqi hostility, he said.

The Maariv newspaper said Rabbi Batzri also planned, if Iraq fired missiles at Israel, to fly around Israel seven times in a helicopter to deflect the rockets.

Iraq fired 39 missiles on Israel during the 1991 Gulf war, killing two persons and

wounding hundreds.

The government has initiated precautionary measures in case Iraq fires more missiles in the event that the United States carries through on threats to attack Baghdad if it persists in barring U.N. inspectors from sites suspected of hiding illegal weapons of mass destruction.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said on Tuesday that the likelihood of an Iraqi attack was "very small."

Richardson is four-for-four in lining up Council support for action against Iraq

NAIROBI (AP) — Bill Richardson, the American ambassador to the United Nations, won support Tuesday from a critical African member of the U.N. Security Council for a possible military strike on Iraq.

Mr. Richardson, on a tour to visit eight of the 14 other Security Council members, said Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi supported the American position of diplomacy with Iraq backed by strong military pressure.

"We're four-for-four," he said after leaving the presidential mansion.

During a trip that began Friday in Stockholm, Mr. Richardson said he had won the backing of Security Council members Sweden, Slovenia, Portugal and Kenya. Next stop is Gabon, followed by Gambia, Brazil and Costa Rica.

Kenya's backing, he said, "is particularly important because Kenya is a member of the non-aligned group at the United Nations, and Kenya is viewed as a leader in Africa. It is important we get its support for our initiatives."

Mr. Richardson and his aides gave President Moi a thorough

briefing on the situation in Iraq, both on the weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Iraq and military details of the potential military strike on Iraqi targets.

"So far, we have solidified our base of support," the ambassador said of his tour, important for follow-up initiatives at the Security Council.

"It's a good investment in retail politics and diplomacy," according to the American envoy, President Moi was concerned about whether the military option could succeed.

The question of what the next step would be if air strikes fail to bring President Hussein to his knees has not been clearly spelled out by Washington. Mr. Richardson, for one, refuses to answer the question.

The next stop on the tour is also important because Gabon takes over the presidency of the Security Council in February.

Gabon frequently follows suit with the French, who have been opposed to any military action, though their position seems to have softened lately. Brazil has shown a certain independence on the Security Council. Costa Rica has indicated concern about a military operation.

IOC fears U.S. may break Olympic Truce

NAGANO (AFP) — The possibility of U.S. airstrikes against Iraq during the Winter Olympics which start here Saturday is causing concern within the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

There is some concern among the IOC and the members of the Olympic Family gathered in Nagano that the Olympic Truce will not be fully respected as in the Lillehammer Games," said Fekru Kidane, who lobbied for the truce on behalf of the IOC and Nagano Olympic organisers.

IOC General Secretary Francois Carrard refused to comment on the possibility that IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch would be in contact with President Bill Clinton.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Monday in Washington he was not aware of any U.S. policy that called for delaying a possible attack on Iraq until after the Games.

But Mr. Carrard stressed that the U.S. had signed and joined up with the Olympic Truce which was proposed by Japan and adopted unanimously by the U.N. General Assembly last November.

Mr. Carrard added: "We hope the truce will be respected. It is a highly symbolic gesture. There is hope that maybe the Olympic Truce will become reality," Eishiro Saito, president of the Games' organising committee, also expressed his concern.

"It is my earnest hope that the Nagano Games can act as a catalyst in enlarging the circle of people who work to ensure a durable peace," said Mr. Saito. The idea of an Olympic Truce was revived for the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer during the Bosnian conflict and again for the Centennial Games of 1996 in Atlanta.

Under the truce, the U.N. calls for a halt of hostilities around the world during the Olympic Games.

New U.S. 'bunker busting' bombs explode underground to destroy buried targets

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. military has a new family of "bunker busting" bombs to choose from if it decides to strike Iraq's underground command posts or buried caches of weapons of mass destruction, officials say.

Faced with deeply buried bunkers during the 1991 Gulf war, the U.S. Air Force launched a crash programme to develop bombs able to penetrate the earth and detonate underground.

Since then, U.S. air force engineers have developed a variety of warheads and fuses designed to get at buried targets with greater precision.

The most powerful is BLU-113, a penetrating warhead that saw action at the end of the Gulf war. It rides a 5,000 pound laser-guided bomb dropped by a F-15E fighter.

The latest is called the Advanced Unitary Penetrator (AUP), a warhead for a 2,000 pound bomb that will plow twice as far through dirt and reinforced concrete as any existing bomb of that size, U.S. air force officials say.

How deep these bombs go before blowing up is secret, however.

Frank Robbins, the U.S. air force official in charge of developing precision strike weapons, would say only, "we can penetrate to great depths now."

"We have been improving our ability to go deeper and to sense where we are once we go to larger depth," he said in a telephone interview from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

"The vast majority of military targets are not at great depths, but there may be selected targets that are beyond the reach of our penetrators," he said.

Besides detonating the warhead below ground, said Mr. Robbins, "it will also let you count how many rooms you've gone through so you can have it go off in the first room, the second room, or the third room."

"That becomes important when we're to look at certain target scenarios. It might be a room three stories down that would house the most critical

Mr. Robbins said the AUP warhead "is fresh out of development. We produced more than we needed in case they were needed operationally."

The AUP can go on any of the U.S. air force's 2,000 pound bombs, which gives commanders a broader choice of ways to deliver it.

It can be used with the AGM-130, an air-to-surface missile that can be fired from an F-15E strike fighter and guided to a target up to 40 nautical miles away with either infrared or television guidance systems.

Laser guided bombs dropped by F-117 Stealth fighters, F-16 fighters and F-15s also can carry the new warhead.

Besides the AUP, the U.S. air force has the BLU-109, another penetrating warhead designed for use with 2,000 pound bombs.

"In addition to needing to penetrate to a certain depth, you need to be able to have [the bomb] go off when you reach that depth. So we have two new fuses in our inventory," said Mr. Robbins.

The most innovative is the hard target smart fuse, which Mr. Robbins said has been through "significant development tests" and is being readied for full production. Extras were built in case they were needed for military operations.

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Exiles: Hussein has nuclear proof underground hideout

PARIS (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has a vast subterranean bomb shelter, a nuclear-proof "mini-city" where he could hide for months from a U.S. attack with no outside help, Iraqi exiles in Europe said Tuesday.

These exiles, once close to the Iraqi leader, told AFP the giant shelter was designed by then-East German engineers and built during the 1980s when Iraq was at war with Iran.

They said President Hussein had always been fascinated with underground shelters, and that the weapons of mass destruction currently the object of U.N. weapons inspectors were undoubtedly hidden beneath ground.

"The Americans can search for the weapons of mass destruction all they want, they won't find them because they, also, are buried," said these sources.

The sources said the sonar scanners used by U.N. weapons inspectors in 1993 to locate President Hussein's weapons of mass destruction had found nothing because the weapons were buried too deep. "These scanners can only

detect arms to a depth of 10 metres (33 feet), and Saddam knows it," they said. "They need a more advanced system to find Saddam's arsenal."

They said that although German engineers had designed the Iraqi president's underground bomb shelter, it had been built exclusively by Iraqis to keep the exact location a secret.

The "fact" of the "builders remains uncertain, they said. The Iraqi exiles described the bomb shelter as a veritable palace, equipped to withstand nuclear attack, in which President Hussein and his immediate family could live in total comfort for months.

"The shelter has everything, even a gymnasium with sauna and a 'patisserie' complete with artificial plants to provide Saddam the illusion that he is taking the air in his garden," they said.

The shelter is powered by its own underground electricity generating plant and equipped with a sophisticated telephone system, they said, adding the facility was so vast that it had to be equipped in the 1990s with electric cars for getting around.

To deal with the problem of attacking underground chemical or biological weapons caches, the U.S. air force has come up with an incendiary bomb coupled with a penetrating warhead.

Exploded underground, the incendiary bomb would generate intense heat to burn up the chemicals or biological agents released by the blast, according to Mr. Robbins.

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Algerian military want to take former PM to court — report

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria's influential armed forces want to take former Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Brahimi to court for his alleged responsibility in civilian massacres, an Algerian newspaper said Tuesday.

La Nouvelle Republique said a case against Mr. Brahimi — who lives in exile in London — was being drawn up by military headquarters to determine exactly what charges could be pressed against him.

But a decision has yet to be taken on whether the matter will actually go to court, the newspaper said, quoting a source close to the defence ministry.

Mr. Brahimi was prime minister under President Chadli Benjedid from January 1984 until his dismissal in November 1988 in the wake of bloody riots provoked by spiralling prices.

He has been in exile in Britain since the military in 1992 cancelled elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) looked set to win.

In interviews with Arabic-language media, including satellite television channels that can be seen in Algeria, Mr. Brahimi accused the military of carrying out massacres at home and a 1994-95 bombing wave in France.

Both have been blamed on extremist groups.

Testifying before a British parliamentary committee on Jan. 22, Mr. Brahimi said "terror is organised by the state" and that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) — blamed for much of the recent killing in Algeria — was "a part of the government."

"It is the military security who organised the bombings [in France] in 1994 and 1995," he said.

Though Algeria now formally has an elected regime under President Liamine Zerroual, Western diplomats say the military retain great influence over the state.

Anwar under police guard after 'bango' was found in car

CAIRO (AFP) — A popular Egyptian actress recovering from a road accident was placed under police guard in the hospital after authorities allegedly found marijuana in her car, court officials said. Samah Anwar, 33, emerged from intensive care at a Cairo hospital on Sunday and was served notice that she was under hospital arrest because "bango" (marijuana) had been found in her car. On Saturday the actress smashed her car against an electricity pylon in northern Cairo as she drove to a party. Police later found 580 grammes of "bango" in the actress' smashed up car, legal sources said.

Queen Mother has champagne smuggled into hospital — report

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Queen Mother arranged to have a case of vintage Krug champagne smuggled into the hospital where she is recovering from a hip replacement operation. The case of 12 bottles — \$160 a bottle — was taken, by her private chef into London's King Edward VII hospital, disguised as a food parcel. The Daily Star said Tuesday. The Queen Mother had been told she would have to give up alcohol for two weeks, but after a week of abstinence, a "royal insider" quoted by the Star, said "she was getting bored rigid and is desperate to get out of hospital and start enjoying life again. British newspapers had speculated on how long the 97-year-old, a keen gin drinker, would be able to refrain from alcohol.

Spanish crown prince wants 'love match'

MADRID (AFP) — Prince Felipe de Borbon, heir to the Spanish throne, wants his marriage to be a "love match," he said in a television interview. He said his marriage would be the result of a "relationship based on love, respect, tenderness." Alluding to the keen interest of the popular press in his sentimental life, Prince Felipe said: "I know there are a lot of reports about my marriage. I will just have to smile and put up with them." Asked if his bride would be of royal lineage or not, the prince replied: "I have already said several times that I did not feel obliged to marry" a princess. "But that does not mean that I have ruled out that option."

Tiffani-Amber Thiessen to quit 'Beverly Hills, 90210'

NEW YORK (AP) — "Beverly Hills, 90210" star Tiffani-Amber Thiessen is moving. Thiessen, who plays Valerie Malone, one of the melodrama's nastiest characters, has already notified show officials about her plans to quit. TV Guide reports in its Feb. 7-13 issue. It was unclear why she decided to leave.

Cards come up trumps for all four players

LONDON (AFP) — Four British card players were hoping to get into the Guinness Book of Records after each was dealt a perfect hand of whist — 13 cards all of the same suit, media reports said. Hilda Golding, 87, could not believe her eyes after she was dealt a complete suit of clubs during the game at a local village hall in southern England. Her three companions were also dealt perfect sets of hearts, spades and diamonds. The odds of just one person getting a perfect hand at whist or bridge are calculated at 635 billion to one. A Guinness Book of Records spokesman said the odds of four getting perfect hands were 2,235,197,406,895,366,368 to 1.